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**PATH DEPENDENCE AND FOREIGN POLICY: A CASE STUDY
OF UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD LEBANON**

by

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ABSTRACT

Currently, the US seems to be solely focused on achieving success in the liberation of Iraq and the establishment of a working democracy there. What has been often overlooked is the historical legacy of a tiny nation in the Levant, Lebanon. Many studies show Lebanon as a viable democracy prior to the start of the civil war in 1975. Today, the infrastructure and the institutions for successfully transitioning back to democracy are still present and are already further enforced. Among the Arab states, Lebanon is the most likely to succeed in transitioning to democracy. Considering US national security strategy of propagating democracy and free enterprise, it would be vital to US national security interests to consider Lebanon. Successfully supporting a return to democracy there would not only lessen its appeal as a haven for terrorism, but would also provide the US with a democratic Arab ally in the Middle East.

This case study identifies path dependence as a significant factor behind the US policy of disengagement toward Lebanon since 1983. It argues that instead of the vicious cycle of disengagement wrought by the 1980s policy, a new path of engaged political activism could bring a more positive future for Lebanon.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. US NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY AND LEBANON

Currently, the United States (US) seems to be solely focused on achieving success in the liberation of Iraq and the establishment of a working democracy there. What has been often overlooked is the historical legacy of a tiny nation in the Levant, Lebanon. Many studies show Lebanon as a viable democracy prior to the start of the civil war in 1975. Today, the infrastructure and the institutions for successfully transitioning back to democracy are still present and are already further enforced. Among the Arab states, Lebanon is the most likely to succeed in transitioning to democracy. Considering US national security strategy of propagating democracy to every corner of the world, it would be in the best interest of the US to consider Lebanon. Successfully supporting a return to democracy there would not only lessen its appeal as a haven for terrorism, but would also provide the US with a democratic Arab ally in the Middle East.

The US national security strategy centers on establishing regimes friendly to the West, arguably through liberal democracy and free enterprise in the Middle East. A viable US policy that could assist Lebanon in establishing a democracy and free market would aid the US in accomplishing its national security strategies in the Middle East.

Aside from bringing Lebanon back to the forefront of US foreign policies, due to a belief that democracy there is feasible with some help, this paper also addresses academic theory. I contribute to academic theory construction and research by testing “path dependence” theory and viewing its application in foreign policy making. Although much has been written on path dependence theory as it applies to business and economics, it remains in the infantile stages in the social and political sciences. This paper will hopefully advance path dependence theory and apply it in a political science setting. It is important for foreign policy makers to be aware of events that could trigger dependent paths, to recognize them, and to consciously factor their effects in decision making.

Failure to do so could negatively affect future policies because alternatives outside the path dependent policy would not be considered.

B. US POLICY TOWARD LEBANON

United States policy toward Lebanon prior to the Beirut bombings in 1983 appeared to be characterized by cooperation, mutual trade, and the promotion of democracy and free enterprise. This policy was centered on the strategic importance of Lebanon. But after the terrorist bombings that killed over 300 US servicemen and other multinational force peacekeepers, the US pulled out, changing its policies and completely ignoring Lebanon. This arguably contributed to the Lebanese state's demise in the 1980's and the prolonged civil war. The war ended with Syria entering Lebanon militarily and exercising hegemony over political leaders, allowing preferred violent groups such as Hezbollah to continue in existence or flourish.

Since the 1983 bombings, US-Lebanese relations have been cold. For the most part, Lebanon has been "lumped in" with Syria as far as foreign policy making is concerned. This may be a mistake. Prior to the civil war, Lebanon had a history of peace and democracy unparalleled in the Middle East. It was where East met West, and was a center of liberal ideas and open exchange of knowledge, trade, and commerce. At one point, it was even touted as the "Switzerland" of the Middle East. For many reasons, geography and democracy among them, Lebanon has historically been of strategic importance to the US.

Thus it is important to understand what happened at that time and what is happening now in Lebanon in the context of foreign policy making. Why was Lebanon historically and strategically important to US national security strategies? How did that importance translate into policies? What drove US policies before the bombings? What influenced those policies after the bombings? Did one particular incident irrevocably influence subsequent policies? Is it still influencing policy making today? Finally, what could US policy makers do to improve relations with Lebanon, assuming it is in the US's best interests to do so? This paper explores possible answers to those questions.

C. PATH DEPENDENCE

Path dependence is a theory that emerged from the field of economics. The theory implies that when markets make remediable errors in the choice of products, in the development of products, or any other aspect of an economic decision, they seem unwilling to change such initial choice even when better choices come along. Neither do markets remedy the error when it can be overcome. Markets seem to be locked-in to a particular path, and all their other choices become dependent on the initial choice.¹ The point in time or the event when that initial choice or decision was made is commonly called a “critical juncture.” The decision made during this critical juncture can have important influences, sometimes irreversible ones, on future decisions. These future decisions then are said to be path dependent on the initial decision.

The decisions made during a critical juncture may be a conscious decision or could be arbitrary. The effects would be the same. A commonly cited example in the business world is the dominance of the VHS format over Beta in the video cassette recorder business.² The decision by early adopters to embrace the VHS format led to future adopters and inventors to follow and market the same VHS format. Beta may have been the superior format but the market could not go back when the choice was made at that critical juncture.

The best known example of a case of path dependence is the configuration of the typewriter (or computer) keyboard. The standard “QWERTY” keyboard arrangement was proven to be dramatically inferior to an arrangement made by August Dvorak and yet we have been and are still using the standard “QWERTY” keyboard arrangement. We do not use the Drovak arrangement keyboard because they are hard to find; and they are hard to find because no one wanted to make and use them.³ We have been so used to the QWERTY keyboard arrangement that efficiency did not matter. We, as well as computer

¹ Stan Liebowitz and Stephen E. Margolis, “Policy and Path Dependence: From QWERTY to Windows 95,” *Regulation*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1995).

² Paul A. David, “Clio and the Economics of QWERTY,” *American Economic Review* (May 1985): 332-7.

³ Ibid.

makers, were locked in to a dependent path created by that initial choice to use the QWERTY arrangement.

There are limited cases outside economics where path dependence has been studied. In comparative politics, Mahoney explains how choices made by Central American countries at critical junctures during the nineteenth-century liberal reform period established the direction for the Central American countries development. Mahoney shows why Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua developed into different types of political regimes, based on decisions these countries made at crucial times in their history. Their choices regarding state and agrarian development during early in the nineteenth century established the development of three types of political regimes in the twentieth century – military-authoritarian (Guatemala, El Salvador), liberal democratic (Costa Rica), and traditional dictatorial (Honduras, Nicaragua).⁴

Likewise, Hedlund argues Russia failed to satisfactorily transition to democracy, market economy, and rule of law because “Russian reformers failed to take into account a deeply rooted Russian path dependence.”⁵ He contends Russia is stuck “in an institutional position that is characterized by market-suppressing, rule-evasive and anti-democratic features;” and that “by focusing narrowly on changes in the formal rules of the game, they neglected pressing needs for broader institutional change, including a credible commitment by the Russian government to impartially enforcing a rules-based system.”⁶

D. PATH DEPENDENCE AND POLICY MAKING THEORIES

Applying path dependence theory to the process of US foreign policy making toward Lebanon is not a simple task. There are many different theories and perspectives that could explain US foreign policy. Each has its own merit. It becomes necessary then to analyze some of the most common theories in

⁴ James Mahoney, *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

⁵ Stefan Hedlund, “Path Dependence in Russian Policy Making: Constraints on Putin’s Economic Choice,” *Post-Communist Economies*, Vol 12, No. 4 (2000). 389, 403.

⁶ Ibid.

academic literature that were considered in this paper and briefly discuss them in relation to path dependence theory.

To perform an analysis of US foreign policy, it would be important first to understand the theoretical framework of foreign policy making. William Quandt identifies three models of foreign policy decision-making: rational, step-by-step analysis of objectives (strategic model); a “shoot from the hip” or politics-driven type decision-making (bureaucratic politics model); and domestic politics-driven policymaking model. Quandt then proceeded to argue that crises play an extremely important role, implying an event-driven policymaking model.⁷

Event-driven policy making seems to be closely related to path dependence. However, it is similar but not the same. Quandt’s event-driven model suggests a policy change only happens after a particular event, as a reaction to a crisis. On the other hand, path dependence theory points to one particular event or decision that influences, sometimes in an irreversible or uncontrollable manner, subsequent policies.⁸

The rational approach assumes rational decision makers make foreign policy decisions. It implies careful deliberation of national interests and rational policy processes exist. That may not always be the case. Jervis argues irrationality often enters in policy making. He contends that perceptions and misperceptions regarding circumstances, actions, and inactions by other actors influence and shape policy choices and decisions.⁹ Path dependence theorists would most likely agree with Jervis.

Many also have argued different perspectives, values, and personalities of different leaders within an administration influences policy making. Among many explanations, George looks at the policymaker as a consistency seeker, assimilating information to make it coincide with his perceptions and existing

⁷ William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 6-10.

⁸ Stan Liebowitz and Stephen E. Margolis, “Policy and Path Dependence: From QWERTY to Windows 95,” *Regulation*, Vol 18, No. 3 (1995).

⁹ Robert Jervis, “Hypotheses on misperception,” *World Politics*, Vol. 20 No. 3 (1968): 456.

beliefs. George even looks at the psychological factors that influence decision-making.¹⁰

Bureaucratic politics too can be influential in policy making. Many, especially in the early 1960's and 70's, wrote about the importance of how policy decisions are made and how that process influences the decisional outcomes. Many applied this paradigm to foreign policy making. Others dissented. Art argues that the bureaucratic politics paradigm is not the central theme in the formulation and implementation of American foreign policy; and that it has been given more merit than necessary. Art contends that the president's decisions, his intents and perspectives, hold greater influence.¹¹

Foreign policy making may also be driven by domestic policies. In the case of Lebanon, the gruesome images broadcasted on national television may have contributed significantly to galvanizing public opinion against continued engagement in Lebanon. In a democracy, presidents have to take action in accordance with the people they represent or suffer consequences at the ballot box. Fearon states that leaders during a crisis have three choices: to attack, to back down, or to further escalate the situation.¹² The leader would have to choose one that his "audience" (domestic constituents) probably wants. President Ronald Reagan backed down.

There are also historical explanations. So much so that Neustadt and May put forward a specific process to help in overcoming the temptation to incorrectly use history. They did however provide many examples in the use of history as a guide to decision making.¹³

¹⁰ Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), Chapters 2, 3.

¹¹ Robert Art, "Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A Critique," *Policy Sciences*, Vol. 4 (1973).

¹² James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (1994): 577-592.

¹³ Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1986), Ch. 7.

Historical explanations can also be derived from specific historical analysis of the Middle East. Fromkin traces how and why the modern Middle East was created from decisions made by the Allies during and after the First World War.¹⁴ It provides possible underlying reasons for the problems the US encounters today.

Picard provides an account of the realities of Lebanon since its creation after the First World War. She gives a compelling account of “the specific historical, ecological, and cultural conditions of the country and its differences from and also its resemblances to its neighbors” taking into account “the heavy heritage of the colonial period....”¹⁵ Schiff and Ya’ari provide a history and analysis of the Israeli War in Lebanon — relevant in US policy making toward Lebanon.¹⁶ Many other authors, including David McDowall and Tabitha Petran, provide rationales for understanding Lebanese and Middle East history and politics, and their relations to US foreign policies.

There is no doubt that realist, liberal, and other theories of international relations and policy have much to say on this issue. Familiar realist arguments of anarchy, balance of power, and security will surface. It is easy to see Reagan’s “cut and run” policy after the 1983 bombings as simply intended to cut US losses regarding an unachievable objective. According to this perspective, subsequent policies were then promulgated based on security considerations and not biased by the bombings. Liberal arguments supporting an explanation that the US was merely compromising with the United Nations and the international community may also arise.

There are a myriad of possible explanations that could compete with path dependence theory. In addition, there are many more factors to consider, including culture and religion that could possibly explain US policy toward

¹⁴ David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1989).

¹⁵ Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country*, (New York, NY: Holmes and Meier, 2002), ix.

¹⁶ Ze’ev Schiff and Ehud Ya’ari, *Israel’s Lebanon War*. (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

Lebanon after the 1983 bombings. I consider these various factors and variables in this paper.

E. PATH DEPENDENCE AND US POLICY TOWARD LEBANON

Using the methodology of process tracing in order to test theory, this paper investigates the historical record of the change in US policy toward Lebanon after the 1983 Beirut bombings. I seek to determine whether US strategic interests changed or some other cause was responsible for altering US policy toward Lebanon. I find that the historical and strategic importance of Lebanon to US national interests did not change after the 1983 Beirut bombings. As such, the significant differences in policy before and after the bombings were not warranted. United States policy should not have drastically changed. I conclude that US interests would have been better served by continuing engagement even after the 1983 Beirut bombings.

Reagan's decision to pull US military personnel from Beirut, a policy that came to be known as "cut and run policy," heavily influenced subsequent US policies toward Lebanon. The president's decision triggered a dependent path, limiting subsequent decision makers' policy choices, and negatively affecting subsequent US policies. While other factors could have contributed to the decision making process, it was clear that the influence of path dependence was significant. The Beirut bombings and the subsequent "cut and run" policy were mentioned and considered in every major policy discussion. Path dependence theory is a factor that explains US policy toward Lebanon for the last two decades. An analysis of US policy toward Lebanon from 1975 to 1983 (Chapters II) and 1984 to 2004 (Chapter III) supports that finding.

The strategic interests behind US support toward Lebanon before the 1983 Beirut bombings still exist today. These interests are even more pressing in the context of the US national security strategy of promoting liberal democracy and free enterprise worldwide currently. The crucial question explored in this paper is "Does current US policy effectively serves US strategic goals?"

Considering the goal of building democratic states, the answer to the above question is: “it could be better.” The US still fails to recognize the path dependence brought about by Reagan’s decision. Lebanon was once the only democratic Arab state in the Middle East. It could once again occupy that distinction. Lebanon still has the infrastructure and the institutions necessary to transition back to democracy. The US needs to recognize that opportunity, break away from its path dependency, and search for a new policy consistent with its national security strategies.

There are two issues presented in this paper that US policy makers can begin evaluating: Hezbollah, and the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003. These are the same issues the Lebanese Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Farid Abboud, considers to be the most controversial issues affecting US-Lebanese relations.¹⁷ The US still considers Hezbollah a terrorist organization; and the US has enacted legislation mandating the US executive branch to take action to stop Syria’s hegemony over Lebanon. Both issues are explored in Chapters IV and V of this paper.

¹⁷ Mr. Abboud often talks about these two issues in many interviews, most recently in a guest lecture at the University of California, Berkeley, January 31, 2004.

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II. UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD LEBANON FROM 1975 TO 1983

A. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I trace the historical background of United States-Lebanese relationship, and focus on the historical and strategic importance of Lebanon and the ensuing United States (US) foreign policy prior to the 1983 Beirut bombings. My analysis of US foreign policy for this chapter will start from the beginning of the second Lebanese Civil War in 1975, to 1983, the year when over 300 US and French peacekeepers were killed in suicide bomber attacks. I analyze US national security strategies and the ensuing foreign policy goals of the administrations of US Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan as they apply toward Lebanon. We will also discuss the effects of the international political environment and the impacts of other international players in US policy making toward Lebanon.

It is important to understand the historical and strategic importance of Lebanon to US national security strategies before the 1983 bombings. Lebanon's importance to the US is a factor determining how future policies toward the country, and more generally, toward the Middle East, were affected when that policy shifted in early 1984. If the historical and strategic importance of Lebanon was the same prior to 1983 and after 1983, why then did US policies change? I argue that the 1983 bombings constituted a critical juncture and created a dependent path policy makers were forced to tread and continue to tread. I explore this hypothesis in the next chapter. In this chapter I establish Lebanon's importance to US national security strategies, and how that was demonstrated in the conduct of US foreign policy. I start with President Ford's administration and the realist influence of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. I then proceed to President Carter's drive for a comprehensive Middle East peace and limited success at the Camp David Accords. I end with a discussion of the idealist tendencies and fear of Soviet expansion which characterized the early part of President Reagan's administration.

B. HISTORICAL AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF LEBANON

Using research data from Freedom House that calculated a country's "freedom rating," Eva Bellin found that in 2002, there were only two out of twenty-one countries in the Middle East and North Africa that qualify as electoral democracies. That was down from three in 1972. Electoral democracy was defined as a "regime that chooses its government through regular, free, competitive election."¹⁸ The two that qualified in 2002 are Turkey and Israel. In 1972, there was another democratic country in that list: Lebanon.

Thus it should not come as a surprise that the US would support the Lebanese government simply on the basis of the idea of democracy. Lebanon had been historically democratic. Its people, despite of, and arguably because of the variety of ethnic and religious identities, had been living together in peace for scores of years. Even when they were under the Ottoman Empire, Lebanon was ruling itself. Engin Akarli stated that it was during this interlude of internal peace under the Ottoman Empire (roughly from the civil war of 1860 to the beginning of the French Mandate in 1920) that the Lebanese learned to effect sociopolitical changes via nonviolent means of conflict resolution – negotiations, arbitration, balance of power politics, shifting alliances. Akarli argued the indigenous Lebanese experience in self rule and reconciliation among different religious groups was the reason for peace and secular democracy (modernization in government) that set Lebanon apart from its Middle East neighbors after independence, and not Western (French) initiative.¹⁹

Akarli's observation implied Lebanese democratic ideas were inherent in Lebanon and not caused by Western influence. Therefore, democracy could flourish if the conditions for democracy could be properly cultivated. This has enormous implications for a US foreign policy that consistently aims to propagate democracy throughout the globe. President George W. Bush stated: "Finally, the

¹⁸ Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* (January 2004): 152.

¹⁹ Engin Akarli further argues that it was French intervention in Lebanese politics that actually hampered efforts for a secular Lebanese nationality. More of Akarli's arguments are in the book *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920*.

United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world.”²⁰

Lebanon historically patterned its economic and cultural systems on Western principles. Lebanon had historical ties with the West as France’s protectorate from the end of World War I, during its rise as a merchant nation, and up until the beginning of its civil war in 1975. During this time, Lebanon, and specifically its capital Beirut, was an example of a liberal democracy in an Arab setting. The British Broadcasting Corporation reported that Lebanon then was regarded as a haven of liberalism and a hub for economic, social, intellectual, and cultural life in the Middle East. Uncensored daily and weekly newspapers and journals were the norm. This facilitated open exchange of ideas and provided various editorial opinions. Its open seaports and airport also facilitated free trade, especially between the Arab world and Europe and the rest of the Western world. Beirut became a banking center for the wealthy Arabs with its free economic and foreign exchange system, strict banking secrecy law, and favorable interest rates. The free flow of capital led to investments in industry — textiles, shoes, printing and food processing. Many dubbed Lebanon as the next Switzerland and Beirut as the Paris of the Middle East. Lebanon was the sole example of a liberal democracy amidst the authoritarian regimes around it, making it strategically important to the US.

Militarily, Lebanon’s geographic position in the Middle East also presented strategic opportunities for the US. Its seaports and airport were ideal forward operating bases and ports of debarkation for supplies and personnel for actions in the Middle East. It was a gateway to the Arab world. A stable, democratic, and West-friendly Lebanon would strengthen the US strategic position in the Levant and would widen US influence in the Mediterranean front (Lebanon, Turkey and Israel). Such a position could have lasting effects in the global war on terrorism.

²⁰ The quote is taken from the introduction to the 2002 National Security Strategy of the US.

Finally, Lebanon was especially significant to the US during the Cold War in preventing the spread of communism and containing Soviet expansion. It also became significant as an actor in bringing peace and stability to the whole region. Reagan stated: "A stable and revived Lebanon is essential to all our hopes for peace in the region."²¹ He further stated the "people of Lebanon deserve the best efforts of the international community to turn the nightmares of the past several years into a new dawn of hope."²² The president then expressed his hopes for a stable and democratic Lebanon and pledged US action in achieving it. That was September 1982, about a year before the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut. That bombing led to the pull out of US armed forces from Beirut, a shift in policy many dubbed as a "cut and run" policy.

Because of Lebanon's strategic importance to US interests, the US government had been deeply involved in ensuring the Lebanon's political stability. Recall that in July 1958 the US sent Marines to help diffuse tensions and prevent escalation of the first Lebanese Civil War by supporting a call for help from Maronite President Camille Chamoun's government. Chamoun's government survived that civil war. The US, however, become particularly identified with the Maronites in the minds of many Lebanese. This would pose problems for the conduct of US policy in the 1980's.

From the Ford administration to the Reagan administration, the US consistently declared support for Lebanese sovereignty, territorial integrity, and central government; and further worked toward peace and stability in that state and the whole region. The US was committed to Lebanon because of its strategic importance to US national security strategies. I now discuss how that commitment translated into policy.

C. THE FORD ADMINISTRATION

In 1975 and 1976, during the initial years of the second Lebanese civil war, US President Gerald Ford and his administration were deeply involved in

²¹ President Ronald Reagan's televised speech to the nation, September 1, 1982.

²² Ibid.

brokering and maintaining ceasefires, trying to find an acceptable solution to the conflict without sending US troops. Early in the civil war, Ford sent Dean Brown to take charge of the US embassy in Beirut, engage all parties, and try to reach a moderate solution. For the most part, the Ford administration was successful in extinguishing small fires and obtaining incremental results. However, no comprehensive plan or approach specifically intended to end Lebanon's problems ever materialized.

President Ford's national security team was composed of public leaders and policy makers still known to us today. It included Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Director of Central Intelligence George Bush, and Assistant to the President and White House Chief of Staff Richard Cheney. In foreign policy matters, the term "Ford administration" mainly refers to this national security team. While committed to stabilizing the Lebanese government, Ford's administration was very much aware of the complexities of the second civil war and realized that it was not as easy as sending troops to support the government.

The Ford administration realized there were three interrelated levels which were at work in the early phases of the civil war: "the strictly domestic struggle to redistribute power, the moderate-radical struggle with the impact of outside powers, and the inter-Arab considerations."²³ On the first level, Lebanon's confessional system and distribution of power became too problematic. The system was based on a 1932 census which gave the Christians a 6 to 5 ratio for seats in parliament, civil service positions, and the Presidency. It was widely perceived that the total population favored the Moslems even without including the Palestinians, who sought refuge in Lebanon following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. As such, Moslems demanded more than the Sunni prime ministership and Shi'ite president of parliament positions allocated to them. They demanded equitable representation based on population. The first level then became the struggle for reallocation of power.

²³ The information presented is taken from a declassified Top Secret National Security Council Meeting Minutes, April 7, 1976.

The second level involved determining what to do with the confessional system, further complicated by external influences. The conservative Christians and moderates within the Moslem camp wanted to preserve the status quo. The radicals wanted to secularize the state and do away with the religious factions. The Christians were supported by Israel while the radical Moslems and Druze were supported by most of the Arab nations. One would think Syria would be on the side of the radicals, and supporting a revolutionary secular Lebanon. At this point however, Syria supported the moderates in preserving the status quo. Since a radical Lebanon would mean more Soviet influence and a larger influx of arms, the end result would have been an increase in threat whereby Syria would be between Iran and Soviet controlled Lebanon. Much more, Syria wanted to increase its influence in the Arab world by establishing itself as the leader and representative of the Palestinians, thousands of them now refugees in Lebanon, as opposed to the leadership of Yasser Arafat. Syria's interest was for a united, not fragmented Lebanon capable of protecting its borders.

While the Ford administration was counseling restraint on both Israel and Syria, it was not opposed to Israel sending arms to the Christians. Secretary of State Kissinger stated: "The Christians are getting arms from Israel which we do not oppose since it helps maintain the balance."²⁴ The "balance of power" he was referring to was between what the Ford Administration considered the radical groups (Kamal Jumblatt radicals and to some extent Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization) supported by Libya and Iraq, and the Lebanese Communist Party supported by the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the Christians on the other. At this point too, the US was not opposed to Syrian intervention since it served US interests in preserving a West-leaning government in Lebanon. The Ford administration however was very much aware of the possible long term implications – Syria could be the dominant power in the Levant and could pose a major radical threat. Israel shared the same concern.

²⁴ Ibid.

The third level, the dynamics of inter-Arab relations, was much more complex than the first two levels and posed major challenges for US policy makers. Conventional assumptions on the possible positions of the various Arab nations toward the Lebanese civil war did not hold true. I showed Syria's role and positions at this point. Egypt's role would have been to support Syrian goals but Egypt was apparently still angry with Syria for a number of reasons, including the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and attempts at Arab unification. Egypt seemed to have provided aid to the radicals.

United States policy makers also saw Saudi Arabia playing a very complex role. Saudi Arabia was supporting the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in order to restrain its excesses and control it while at the same time it was opposing the radicals. Saudi Arabia also wanted Syria to succeed politically in Lebanon and bring stability; but it did not want Syria to bring in its military. Doing so would cause Israel to move in militarily also.

Jordan expressed its support for the Syrian intervention and the elimination of the radicals. In his visit to the US and meeting with Ford in 1976, King Hussein of Jordan reminisced about its own handling of radicals in Jordan in 1970 and wanted Syria to finish the job.

The most dominant and influential figure in President Ford's national security team was Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Often he set the stage for defining overarching strategy for US policies in the Middle East. He stated:

My country's history, Mr. President, tells us that it is possible to fashion unity while cherishing diversity, that common action is possible despite the variety of races, interests, and beliefs we see here in this chamber. Progress and peace and justice are attainable. So we say to all peoples and governments: Let us fashion together a new world order.²⁵

Working under Kissinger's grand strategy of establishing a new world order, US policy in Lebanon was integrally connected to the search for Middle East peace. For many observers, the Ford administration simply considered

²⁵ This quote is taken from Henry Kissinger's speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations, October 1975.

Lebanon an extension of the Arab-Israeli conflict. I will not dispute such observations or assumptions regarding internal motivations. What was evident in government documents was that the Ford administration still recognized the need to stabilize Lebanon by dealing with Lebanon's internal struggle for power. The motivation may have been to prevent a wider Arab-Israeli conflict but the means was still ending the Lebanese civil war via internal persuasions, hence the attempts to prevent Israel and Syria from entering the civil war. The US feared a large scale Syrian intervention would invoke a larger Israeli military response.

By the end of the Ford administration's term, however, US stabilization and peacekeeping efforts in Lebanon started to unravel. As the PLO and other left-leaning factions gained strength, the fragile stability of the agreements which the Ford administration brokered began to break. In the interest of stabilizing Lebanon, the US, encouraged by Jordan's King Hussein, acquiesced to and risked a large-scale Syrian intervention. Since the Syrian intervention was against the PLO and the leftists, and since it was intended to protect the embattled Christians and the rightists, the US and Israel did not prevent the Syrian armed forces from engaging in the fighting.

Syria's large scale involvement was not received well by Egypt, Iraq, Libya and other Arab nations. Egypt, Iraq, and Libya consequently joined forces against the Syrian move, and by association against the US and Israel, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. Many believed Syria's involvement was part of a grand conspiracy led by Henry Kissinger. Under the grand scheme, Syrian intervention would end the PLO, resolving Israel's main problem. Israel would then give back the Golan Heights. Jordan would get the West Bank back; and the radicals and the communists will be out. Finally, Saudi Arabia would monopolize the oil industry; and American influence will prevail in the region.

In the end, Syria's involvement resulted in most of Lebanon coming under Syrian control while the fighting continued and even intensified. The promised stability did not materialize. Further, the conflict clearly became internationalized.

D. THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION

Henry Kissinger's influence came to an abrupt end when President Jimmy Carter took office in 1977. United States' policy moved further away from stabilizing the Lebanese crisis and moved towards regional peacemaking in the Middle East via finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The logic seemed to be that peace in the Middle East will eventually bring peace and stability to Lebanon. As a result, active US engagement in trying to end the civil war was given less importance than forcing a peace treaty between Arabs, particularly Egypt, and Israelis.

President Carter's key advisers, Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, were also the key foreign policy decision makers. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Vice President Walter Mondale, while valuable in their areas were not particularly forceful in Middle East foreign policy making. Immediately, the Carter administration embarked on a plan for a comprehensive Middle East peace based on three principles – need for concrete manifestations of peace (between Arab states and Israel), the need for security arrangements for all parties, and the need for a solution to the Palestinian problem (both political and humanitarian). This trio of priorities came to be known as the trinity of peace, borders-security, and the Palestinian question. President Carter himself met with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Jordan's King Hussein, Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, and Syrian President Assad to advance a comprehensive peace agenda.

Absent from the president's comprehensive plan was facilitating an end to the Lebanese Civil War. At this point, US policy became so focused on the dynamics of inter-Arab relations that Lebanon was overlooked. The civil war escalated with the Israeli army invasion of southern Lebanon in 1978 after Israeli civilians were allegedly killed in a PLO guerilla raid. The Carter administration supported the deployment of a United Nations force (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon to stabilize the area, but found little success.

It was during the Carter administration when Syria and Israel seemed to have free reign to independently pursuing their own agenda and policies. There was limited engagement from the US. The Carter administration was seemingly unable to cope with the realities of Lebanese and Middle East politics and simply watched while events happened. For the most part, President Carter also was preoccupied with advancing human rights and forcing regimes in the Middle East to improve their human rights records. In the meantime, Israel occupied most of southern Lebanon; and without much objection from the US, it organized a proxy Lebanese militia in the occupation zone. Syria, now with almost complete control of Lebanon, started flexing its muscles and was determined to gain hegemony over Lebanese politics. In 1978, Syria started shelling Christians in east Beirut. Syria was previously allied with the Christians, pursuing goals similar to Israel's.

President Carter's short term saw the US largely overlooking the tiny state in the Levant in favor of a comprehensive Middle East peace plan. He was instrumental in forging bilateral peace between Egypt and Israel, and could take much credit for the Camp David Accords. Achieving such peace, however, brought Israel's focus from its southern front to the north towards Syria and Lebanon.

E. THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

The Reagan administration's foreign policy toward developing states during the first few years of Reagan's presidency (1981-1983) was characterized largely within the context of expansionist Soviet foreign policy. Policy toward Lebanon was no exception. As early as his election campaign, Reagan stated: "The Soviet Union underlies all the unrest that is going on. If they weren't engaged in this game of dominoes, there wouldn't be any hot spots in the world."²⁶ Reagan's contempt for Soviet leaders' foreign policies became apparently clear in his very first press conference after being sworn in as the 40th US president. He charged that Soviet leaders "reserve unto themselves the right

²⁶ From an interview cited in Karen Elliott House, "Reagan's World," *Wall Street Journal*, June 3, 1980, p. 1.

to commit any crime—to lie, to cheat" to achieve "world revolution and a one-world socialist or communist state."²⁷ A few years later, he called the Soviet Union an "evil empire."²⁸

He blamed the Soviet Union for the spread of regional unrests and he was dedicated to prevent the Soviets from gaining the upper hand in the US-Soviet rivalry. Central to this goal was defense (rebuilding America's military power) and support for states friendly to the US. In Europe, this meant the introduction of "Peacekeeper" missiles with nuclear warheads that could reach the Soviet Union while also embarking on research and development of a Strategic Defense Initiative that could neutralize Soviet nuclear missiles coming into Europe and the United States. In the Middle East, this meant military and economic support to governments willing to ally with the United States. In the early 1980's, Lebanon's Christian (Maronite)-led government became closely identified with accepting such US support.

The Reagan administration, mostly through the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations, was regularly providing assistance for Lebanese reconstruction via Lebanon's Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR). In 1981, the UN International Children's Emergency Fund was entrusted to carry out 43.5 million US dollars worth of special projects in the south through the CDR. The UN Development Fund provided 4 million US dollars for reconstruction projects. The US Agency for International Development also provided 5.7 million US dollars for housing projects, reconstruction, technical assistance, and other health projects.

During Carter's term, US foreign policy focus drifted away from bringing peace and stability in Lebanon as prerequisite to obtaining a broader Middle East peace. In the Reagan administration, by roughly the middle of Reagan's first term, peace and stability in Lebanon became synonymous to Arab-Israeli peacemaking. A lasting peace in the Middle East would start with peace and

²⁷ White House Press Conference, January 29, 1981.

²⁸ From President Reagan's "Evil Empire" speech, March 8, 1983.

stability in Lebanon. Lebanon, as an Arab nation, was a step toward an Arab-Israeli peace. Lebanon went to the forefront of Arab-Israeli peace process. The president was also committed to bringing democracy back to Lebanon and guarding it away from the Soviet orbit.

Lebanon became the battleground for Arab-Israeli peace. Southern Lebanon, now the headquarters for the PLO, was the sight of intense hostilities between Israel, Israeli-backed militias, and the PLO. In 1982, Israel again invaded Lebanon after the attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador to London. The Israeli army surrounded west Beirut and demanded the evacuation of the PLO and Syrians from Beirut. France, the US, and Italy sent armed forces to oversee the evacuation of Palestinian forces. Yasser Arafat and most of his men were evacuated, leaving mostly women and children in the refugee camps.

Several events in 1982 rocked the Reagan administration's resolve. The main US supporter and open to Israeli support, president-elect Bashir Gemayel, was assassinated, leaving a void in the Phalange (Maronite Christian) faction's leadership. Shortly thereafter, Israel struck back by sending Phalangist militias into the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Chatila and massacring hundreds of civilians, the women and children who were left in the camps. The US, France, and Italy were again forced to send a multinational force to help stabilize the situation and try to restore order to the war ravaged country.

In 1983, the Reagan administration, mainly through the shuttle diplomacy of Secretary of State Shultz, came very close to forging an Israeli-Lebanese peace treaty. In fact, Lebanon and Israel signed an agreement on May 17, 1983 that could have ended the Israeli occupation then. Israeli withdrawal, however, was contingent upon the withdrawal of Syrian forces. Syria refused such condition, creating tensions on US-Syrian relationship. Previously, Syria and the US shared mutual goals of bringing peace and stability back to the Lebanese state. With Syrian forces firmly in place inside Lebanon, Syrian interests dictated its continued presence would accomplish that goal better than leaving.

Take note however that such an Israeli-Lebanese peace treaty would have been between the Christian president Amin Gemayel, who took over from his murdered brother Bashir, and Israel, and arguably not between Lebanon and Israel. At this point, the Lebanese government had been closely identified as merely a faction advancing Maronite interests, and as a faction friendly to Israel. The Lebanese government had lost credibility, especially within its growing Moslem population. The Lebanese government troops were seen as Phalange militias fighting against Moslem militias.

The Lebanese government's credibility as championing the state's interests presented serious problems for US policy. Who could the US government support? Even with the Lebanese government now clearly identified with the Phalange faction, the US continued to support the remaining semblance of a legitimate state, the government of Amin Gemayel. For the Reagan administration, Lebanon's sovereignty rested with that "Phalangist" government. Lebanese Moslems, Druze, and other Christian factions fighting that government were therefore seen as on the wrong side of US policy. The US could not afford Lebanon falling into communists or Muslim extremists' control; and Amin Gemayel's government was all they had.

The Reagan administration, believing Amin Gemayel's government would fall without US military help, approved the shelling of Moslem areas from US warships. Such action clearly identified the US as a cobelligerent (instead of a broker for peace) in the civil war on the side of Amin Gemayel's Lebanese Christian forces. The US support for the Christian president was not seen as support for the Lebanese state, but rather support for the leader of the Phalange faction.

Such support would cost the lives of many American service members and diplomats throughout 1983. On April 18, 1983, the US embassy was bombed by Lebanese allies of Iran; Syrian involvement was also suspected. It seemed Syria was determined to keep Lebanon in a state of chaos to keep any fighting and factionalism away from Syria itself. Lebanon was the buffer from Israel and

the PLO and anybody else in the fight. The embassy bombing cost the lives of 63 people, seventeen of whom were Americans, and eight of them employees of the Central Intelligence Agency.

On October 23, 1983, at 0620, a suicide bomber drove a delivery truck loaded with 12,000 pounds of chemical explosives to the US Marine compound at the Beirut airport. The bomber detonated the explosives, collapsing the four story Marine headquarters building to rubble, and crushing many to death inside. A total of 242 people were killed – 220 US Marines, 18 Navy sailors, three Army soldiers, and one Lebanese. The FBI reported this was the largest non nuclear explosion at that time.

Up until the bombings, the Reagan administration's resolve and intentions of preserving Lebanon's sovereignty had been one of the main reasons for continued engagement in Lebanon. How would the bombings affect such resolve? The Reagan administration was now facing a critical juncture in US history of involvement in the Middle East. How it would react and what policies it would enact would greatly affect future policies and may potentially establish a dependent path that may limit the administration's and other future policy makers' policy options. We shall explore that possibility in the next chapter.

F. ASSESSING US POLICY TOWARD LEBANON FROM 1975 TO 1983

During the period 1975 to 1983, Lebanon's strategic importance was well established and US policy toward Lebanon generally reflected its importance. The Ford administration recognized the underlying problems of power politics among the various confessions within Lebanon. The Carter administration focused more on a comprehensive peace plan for the whole region that still indirectly included Lebanese peace albeit as a consequence of a broader Middle East peace. The Reagan administration up to 1983 was deeply involved in trying to find a way to end the civil war and restoring order to the war ravaged country.

The US seemed clearly committed to the sovereignty and independence of the Lebanese state. The US wanted to bring back the pre-1975 democracy

that existed in Lebanon. What was unclear in US policy however was an understanding of how to support the Lebanese state and how to help them effect that transition back to democracy. United States policy makers seemed to have failed to realize the complexities of what the Ford administration called the first level or the first and foremost issue confronting the civil war — internal struggle for power.

United States policy was focused more on inter-Arab relations and regional peace and security. As such, the US concentrated on a broader Middle East strategy instead of sticking to stated goals of helping states friendly to the US. Its foreign policy toward Lebanon became tied directly to the Arab-Israeli conflict and was focused on finding a solution on that perceived larger issue. As a result, it failed to formulate policies that could have better served the more relevant (as far as ending the civil war) Lebanese issue of internal struggle for power.

Nevertheless, US intentions and conduct of foreign policy toward Lebanon were meant to uphold the Lebanese state's independence and sovereignty. Lebanon's historical and strategic importance to US national security strategies was the main reason for such policies. In the next chapter, we shall explore if that reason still held after the 1983 bombings and determine if the ensuing policies (after the bombings) reflected it.

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III. CRITICAL JUNCTURE AND PATH DEPENDENCE: US FOREIGN POLICY FROM 1983 TO PRESENT

A. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I analyze President Ronald Reagan's policy shift introduced in the end of Chapter II and how it affected later foreign policies. I focus on analyzing path dependence and US foreign policy. I pose the following questions. How did the 1983 policy change affect later policies? Did the policy change "lock in" the US to a path dependent policymaking process based on a possibly misguided change? What other implications are there, especially regarding the growth of terrorist organizations?

I explore those questions by analyzing US foreign policy making toward Lebanon from the remainder of Reagan's presidency (1983-1988) to presidents George H.W. Bush (1989-1992) and William Clinton (1993-2000), to the current administration's view of the Middle East, in relation to US national security strategies. My analysis of US foreign policy toward Lebanon during this period shows that there were many factors that weighed in formulating US policy. However, regardless of other factors that may have contributed to policymaking, the events of 1983, the Beirut bombings, continually affected policy formulation (or its non formulation).

Prior to 1983 bombings, the US' intentions and its conduct of foreign policy toward Lebanon were meant to uphold the Lebanese state's independence and sovereignty. Lebanon was a free and democratic country throughout its modern history and the US government recognized it was in the US' best interests to fully support Lebanon. Its historical and strategic importance to US national security strategies was the main reason for favorable support. In this chapter, I explore if that reason remained after the 1983 bombings, if the US still had vital interests in Lebanon, and determine if post-1983 policies reflected vital interests.

B. THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION (1983 – 1988)

Initial reactions from the Reagan administration during the six months following the October 1983 attacks were meant to show US determination against what the US now called “terrorist activities.” High ranking US officials, including then vice president George H.W. Bush, visited Lebanon and the region to initiate talks with Middle East leaders.

A series of National Security Decision Directives (NSDD) were immediately formulated and approved by the president. NSDD 109, “Responding to the Lebanon Crisis,” was signed the same day as the Beirut bombings and specified the steps the US would take to respond to the terrorist attacks militarily. It also ordered a comprehensive security review of the US Multinational Force (MNF) contingent by a delegation led by General Kelley, and asked Kelley to “convey to the leadership of the Lebanese Armed Forces the urgent need to tighten security in the south Beirut area including closer collaboration with Lebanese security agencies and those confessional militias able to assist in controlling the movement of hostile terrorist factions.”²⁹ NSDD 109 was particularly significant in that the US formally questioned the ability of the Lebanese government to maintain law and order. Further, in this document the US recognized and acknowledged confessional militias as relevant, not for ending the civil war, but as assets for protecting American lives.

On 28 October 1983, the president signed NSDD 111, “Next Steps toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East,” in an effort “to regain the initiative in the Middle East by acting once more in a bold way, especially in the aftermath of the Beirut tragedies.”³⁰ This directive affirmed the Reagan administration’s commitment to Lebanon’s independence and security, and vowed to use the full strength of the US to achieve its goal. This directive also reaffirmed US support for the implementation of the May 17 Lebanon-Israel agreement.

²⁹ NSDD 109, October 23, 1983.

³⁰ NSDD 111, October 28, 1983.

NSDD 117, signed December 5, 1983, instructed the American contingent of the Multinational Force “to pursue a policy of vigorous self-defense against all attacks from any hostile quarter.”³¹ This was an escalation from NSDD 103, signed September 10, 1983, which stated US concept of operations “should be one of aggressive self-defense” and “should demonstrate ... impartiality in the confessional conflict.”³² This directive authorized destructive fire against a full range of foreseeable threats regardless of who fired against US interests. It also pressured the Lebanese government to “undertake a more aggressive security posture in and around Beirut against radical Lebanese and foreign elements which pose a security risk to the MNF.”³³

Other directives and policy guidance followed. Each seemed to attempt to secure a handle on the Lebanese crisis, but each also brought potential unintended consequences. The focus of the directives became increasingly about combating terrorism and protecting US peacekeepers and other assets. Military operations, mainly bombings from US Navy destroyers, were approved for anti-terrorism reasons. The military rules of engagement were focused on defending the official American presence in Lebanon; US naval and tactical air power could be employed at will and the military could fire at will when hostile fire directed at US personnel or facilities was identified. Many rounds were fired, directed at terrorists, which also brought collateral damage. In the process, US credibility as an honest broker for peace among the many factions fighting in Lebanon, as well as confidence in US commitment to Lebanese sovereignty, eroded.

US foreign policy toward Lebanon after the October 1983 Beirut bombings and for the rest of Reagan’s presidency became characterized by increased cooperation with Israel and more overt hostility against Syria. In the process, Lebanon was trapped in the middle of two powers vying for regional supremacy. Further, the US became more involved with Iran while waging a war against

³¹ NSDD 117, December 5, 1983. Emphasis in the original.

³² NSDD 103, September 10, 1983.

³³ NSDD 117, December 5, 1983.

terrorism. Again, the future of the state of Lebanon was trapped in the middle as the radical group Hezbollah was funded and supported by Iran. The rhetoric for supporting Lebanese sovereignty by US administration officials was still there; but the willingness to put words into action may have been insufficient.

As the situation in Lebanon seemed hopeless, the US turned to Israel as its most reliable ally in the Middle East. The Reagan administration, most notably Under Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, seemed to have determined a supportive US policy in Lebanon can only succeed through increased cooperation with Israel. NSDD 111 essentially defined an US strategic cooperation agreement with Israel. The directive found it important for the US government to “undertake steps which will enhance the appeal of the government of Lebanon with the key factions who have not yet supported the GOL.”³⁴ The directive specifically recognized “that Syria and Israel, as major neighboring powers, have interests in Lebanon’s future which cannot be ignored or dismissed.”³⁵ To US policy makers, it was a choice between Israel or Syria regarding which could provide stability and be a unifying force. Israel was more familiar to the US and the US believed it could better influence it than it could Syria.

With an increasingly pro-Israel stance, hostilities between Syria and the US could not be avoided. The Reagan administration was convinced Syria had something to do with the Beirut bombings and resented Syria’s support for terrorist groups. But Syria was still perceived as vital to the peace process, and the Reagan administration largely refrained from direct action against Syria. Instead, the administration let the Lebanese government do the fighting and concentrated on aiding the Lebanese government’s military in the fight.

NSDD 123, signed by Reagan in February 1984, approved a military plan that provided for “possible actions the United States Government could take to assist the Government of Lebanon in responding to the changing threats and

³⁴ NSDD 111, October 28, 1983. GOL is the abbreviation for Government of Lebanon.

³⁵ Ibid.

military requirements.”³⁶ Among other stipulations, the US was to provide counterinsurgency and counterterrorism training, modern artillery ammunition, and other US equipment in order to deter firing on greater Beirut from Syrian-controlled areas. The directive also authorized “U.S. naval forces to provide naval gunfire and air support against any units in Syrian-controlled territory in Lebanon firing into greater Beirut”³⁷

By early 1984, Reagan was faced with making a crucial decision at a critical juncture. The US’ military and diplomatic efforts were not yielding desired results. In addition, Reagan was facing reelection in the US and could not afford to make more mistakes in the Lebanese crisis. During a National Security Council (NSC) meeting in January 1984, the president asked the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to develop a timetable for the phasing down of USMNF ashore while still planning for a continued presence offshore.

By the end of February, the Reagan administration accepted the fluidity of the situation in Lebanon. The administration could do nothing to stop Syria from forcing Lebanon to abrogate the May 17 Lebanon-Israel Agreement. Lebanon abrogated in exchange for Syria’s guarantee of a cease fire and support for a government of national unification. The Reagan administration also recognized its shortcoming in credibility. In NSDD 128, Reagan asked for a plan to bolster confidence in US commitments in the Middle East because of “the serious developments in Lebanon and the perceived erosion of U.S. credibility”³⁸ Such a plan did not materialize.

By April 1984, the withdrawal of all US military personnel, ashore and offshore, became imminent. As Reagan was sending the US Congress “four separate bills to attack the pressing and urgent problem of international

³⁶ NSDD 123, February 1, 1984.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ NSDD 128, February 26, 1984.

terrorism,”³⁹ US military personnel were abandoning its failed Lebanon peacekeeping mission.

Reagan signed one more directive directly involving US policy toward Lebanon before his second term expired, NSDD 149 “Support to Government of Lebanon in Planning for Counter Terrorism Operations.” This directive, signed in November 1984, is still classified. No doubt influenced by the catastrophic US experience in Lebanon, Reagan approved many other directives involving US policy in combating international terrorism. This included NSDD 176, “Combatting Terrorism in Central America,” signed in July 1985, NSDD 205, “Acting against Libyan Support of International Terrorism,” signed in January 1986, and NSDD 207, “The National Program for Combatting Terrorism,” also signed in January 1986.

C. THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION (1989 – 1992)

United States policy toward Lebanon and the Middle East under President George H.W. Bush’s Administration was conducted with extreme caution. There were no grand schemes and there were no big plans. The Bush administration probed cautiously to avoid heightening expectations. There was a conscious effort however to understand the realities of Middle East politics.

This low key and cautious approach brought considerable success for progressing peace in the region. Under the astute negotiating and deal-making of Secretary of State James Baker, the Bush administration was credited with opening the way for Israelis and Arabs to come to the peace table. Baker brokered many conferences in a short period of time, culminating in the historic October 1991 Madrid conference.

Success in the Arab-Israeli conflict did not always translate to favorable consequences for US-Lebanese relationship. Even the historic Madrid conference only brought a small potential gain for Lebanon. The number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who would be able to go back to Palestine if an

³⁹ NSDD 138, “President’s Anti-terrorism Legislation,” signed April 26, 1984.

Arab-Israeli peace agreement was concluded was not significant. On the other hand, progress in the Arab-Israeli conflict meant shifting the focus away from Lebanon and sidestepping these other problems. Arguably, the US could have made substantial contributions to these issues. Instead, they became lost opportunities.

With the trauma of the Beirut bombings still fresh in the American public's mind, the Bush administration was not ready to re-engage Lebanon. The administration did not begin any separate initiatives to improve US-Lebanese relations. Lebanon just concluded a long and bloody civil war where the US became a belligerent and paid the cost of such involvement. The US was not about to become involved again. At best, policy toward Lebanon was simply linked to the overall Middle East peace process. At worst, Lebanon was ignored and considered untouchable.

Lebanon may have become too difficult to justify as a national security interest. The Cold War was over; and the threat of Soviet expansion was no longer a viable reason for action. Protecting an inexpensive and stable supply of oil from the region was still a US national security interest, but Lebanon was not an oil-producing state. Lebanon therefore did not constitute a US strategic interest regarding oil. Absent a clear public justification for action, and considering the fear of risking and losing American lives to terrorist actions, the Bush administration largely ignored Lebanon.

The US removed itself from influencing Lebanon's future and left Syria to take the lead. The Ta'if Agreement of 1989 effectively ended the civil war by establishing special relations between Lebanon and Syria. Syrian forces would stay in place to provide stability for two years, after which the Syrian and Lebanese governments would negotiate Syrian withdrawal. General Michel Aoun, head of the Lebanese government at that time, vehemently opposed the agreement, fearing the Syrians would not leave. He argued that the political

reforms were not acceptable.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the Lebanese parliament accepted the Ta'if Agreement. Aoun was later ousted from power.

The 1991 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent formation of a US-led coalition to liberate Kuwait compounded the complexity of US-Lebanese relations. Eager to bring Syria into the coalition, the Bush administration was willing to ignore Syrian hegemony over a supposedly independent and sovereign Lebanese state.

Convinced the Bush administration lacked the will to object and become involved, Syria further fortified its hold on Lebanon with a series of treaties and security arrangements. The May 1991 Lebanon-Syria Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination mandated full coordination in practically all aspects of state governance, including political, economic, scientific, industrial, security, and other fields. In September 1991, Lebanon and Syria signed the Lebanon-Syria Defense and Security Agreement, strengthening Syria's military grip, ensuring Lebanon does not become a threat to Syria's security, and introducing restrictions and media censorship. The Lebanese government acquiesced to these treaties.

Lebanon came under Syrian hegemony politically under the guise of being the arbiter of Lebanon's warring factions. Over 30,000 Syrian military personnel stayed in Lebanon to protect such hegemony. The Israeli military was also in Lebanon but could not exercise influence in the government. The Israeli military vowed to stay until the Syrian army left. Fighting continued with the Shi'ite radical group Hezbollah, backed by Syria and Iran, taking the lead in opposing the Israelis and their proxies. Hezbollah's unconventional tactics of suicide bombing and hostage taking in the 1980's qualified them as a terrorist organization. Lebanon became notorious in the US as a safe haven for international terrorism.

⁴⁰ General Aoun was appointed by then president Amin Gemayel to rule Lebanon under an interim military cabinet until elections could be held. The US previously fully supported the Gemayel government; but the Bush administration did not recognize General Aoun's regime.

The Bush administration's policy toward Lebanon and the Syrian occupation was predicated on a misguided belief that Syria would abide by the Ta'if Accords. In the summer of 1992, Secretary of State Baker and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Edward Djerejian met with Syrian and Lebanese officials in Damascus to discuss the redeployment of Syrian troops from Lebanon per the Ta'if Accords and in preparation for Lebanon's upcoming parliamentary elections. However, the Syrian military remained.

D. THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION (1993 – 2000)

Clinton's speeches during his presidential election campaign brought hope that his future administration would again realize Lebanon's historic and strategic importance and provide assistance in Lebanon's reconstruction. Criticizing the Bush administration in a gathering of Lebanese Americans, Clinton stated: "The Bush administration appears willing to sacrifice the prospects for an independent Lebanon in order to curry favor with Syria's dictator."⁴¹ He added: "the withdrawal of Syrian troops is essential to Lebanon's regaining its independence."⁴²

Clinton's words were simply campaign rhetoric. Once in office, the Clinton administration did very little to advance the American Lebanese cause. Other than discussions of when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright would lift the travel ban for tourists and businesses, including discussions of allowing American businesses to set up in Lebanon, the Clinton administration passed up on the opportunity to help build a democratic Lebanon. Like Reagan six months after the bombing and Bush throughout his short term, the Clinton administration was stuck in the dependent path of doing nothing and subsuming Lebanon's interests under the larger Arab-Israeli peace process. Almost 10 years after the Beirut bombings, the Clinton administration was still unwilling to get involved in a country once considered a vital interest.

⁴¹ "Statement of Presidential Candidate Bill Clinton on Lebanon (Excerpts)," *The Beirut Review* (No. 4), Fall 1992.

⁴² Ibid.

With the executive branch unwilling to take on Lebanon, the legislative branch took the lead in promulgating policy. Throughout the 1990's, legislators, many of them of Lebanese descent, took on the cause of some Lebanese Americans. US foreign policymaking toward Lebanon shifted from the executive to the legislative branch.

Intense lobbying by Lebanese-American groups resulted in congressional hearings. In June 1997, Representative Benjamin A. Gilman of New York conducted a hearing on US policy toward Lebanon before the Committee on International Relations in the US House of Representatives. Top witnesses included Amin Gemayel, the former president of Lebanon, Peter Tanous, the founding chairman of American Task Force for Lebanon, Daniel Nassif from the Council of Lebanese-American Organizations, and Daniel Pipes, then editor of the *Middle East Quarterly*. These witnesses repeatedly argued for US engagement in the reconstruction of Lebanon and asked the US Congress to help restore its independence and sovereignty.

Representatives from the state department also tried to convince Congress that the executive branch was doing all it could, in their own way, to assist Lebanon. In the 1997 hearing, the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Mr. David Welch, argued that "US policy toward Lebanon remains firmly committed to its unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity."⁴³ It was, however, up to Lebanon to work toward their own "political and economic objectives through reconstruction, national reconciliation, adherence to free markets;" while the US "continues to work hard to achieve a comprehensive regional peace and to help Lebanon recover from civil war."⁴⁴ The tone of Mr. Welch's testimony seemed to suggest there was no immediate need to directly assist Lebanon, and that a regional strategy was preferred. When asked about Syria's alleged violation of the Ta'if Accords, Welch's choice

⁴³ The quote was taken from the transcript of the text of the hearing on US policy toward Lebanon before the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, June 25, 1997.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

of words suggested direct engagement with Lebanon was still off-limits for fear of alienating Syria and losing its support in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The Clinton administration's efforts in advancing the Arab-Israeli peace process through Syria came to an end after the failed summit between Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Assad in March 2000. Further, the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces from south Lebanon in May 2000 removed one of the main reasons for the Syrian military's stay in Lebanon. But Syria continued to be an important state in the Clinton administration's Middle East policy, which made policy making toward Lebanon a sensitive task. Lebanon's independence and sovereignty could wait a little longer.

The congressional hearings resulted in the formulation of proposals on how the US could help in Lebanon's reconstruction as well as formulating a proposed US policy toward the country. In June 1999, Representative Michael P. Forbes introduced H.R. 2056, the Lebanon Independence Restoration Act of 1999, in the first session of the 106th Congress. It proposed to establish US policy "regarding the necessity of requiring the full withdrawal of all Syrian military, security, intelligence and proxy forces from Lebanon and the restoration of Lebanon's independence."⁴⁵ The proposal did not become law that year but laid the foundation for the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, signed into public law in December 2003 under the Bush administration.

E. THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION (2001 – PRESENT)

Early in the Bush administration's term, the executive branch seemed poised to follow previous US policy and continue to pay lip service to supporting Lebanon's sovereignty. It seemed to have accepted Syria's hegemony over the country. In 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell abruptly canceled his scheduled visit to Beirut after meeting with Syrian officials about the situation in south Lebanon. Both Lebanese government officials and the opposition viewed

⁴⁵ H.R. 2056, June 8, 1999.

the cancellation as a major tilt toward Syria and against Lebanon. It was evident that the Bush administration was courting Syria for its support in building a coalition against Iraq.

Things changed after the terrorist attacks in the US on September 11, 2001. The Bush administration had justification to pursue a clear strategy on foreign policy and wage a global war on terrorism. To protect national security, the Bush administration advocated a more offensive posture that included the right to engage in preemptive strikes. In what has become known as the Bush doctrine, the US national security strategy aimed to fight international terrorism, especially the state sponsored variety, which included countries harboring terrorists. Another goal of the national security strategy was to promote greater freedom worldwide through democratic reforms, free enterprise, and the elimination of groups or nations that organize with the intention to stifle that progress through radical means.

The new grand strategy was heavily influenced by political morality, and greatly affected present and future policy actions toward the Middle East peace process as well as Lebanon. The Bush administration's foreign policy position institutionalized its moral commitment to support democratic rule, advance freedom, and increase emphasis on state independence and sovereignty. In a speech in November 2003, the president stated "the United States has adopted a new policy, a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East" and that "the advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country."⁴⁶

In the new Bush administration strategy, the moral cause of advancing freedom and fighting global terrorism were enough justification for US intervention. There were essentially two possible outcomes tied to this strategy for the peace process. It could culminate with a peaceful solution between two nations (Israel and Palestine) or it will continue to propagate hatred, terrorism, and ethnic conflict, not only among the key nations involved, but also among those who sympathize with one side or the other from within the nations.

⁴⁶ November 6, 2003 remarks by President Bush at the 20th anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy.

For Lebanon, the Bush administration's position provided an opening for changing its path and re-defining policy toward Lebanon. The events of September 11, 2001 constituted a critical juncture and the Bush doctrine that evolved presented another possible path the Bush administration could take. By taking on terrorism, the "hands off" approach to Lebanon previous administrations followed could be altered. In September 2001, almost 18 years after the Beirut bombings, the effects and influence of Reagan's "cut and run" policy in 1984 could now be reversed.

By May 2003, Powell stated that Lebanon "could be a model for democracy and free trade in the region" and that the US "supports an independent and prosperous Lebanon, free of all, all foreign forces."⁴⁷ He stated these words following his meeting with Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, speaker of Parliament Nabil Berri, and Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, the Lebanese triumvirate leadership. Powell also recognized the need for considering Lebanese concerns in the Middle East process. He stated that "there has to be another track in addition to the track that is laid out clearly in the roadmap, there has to be another track that deals with Syrian concerns and Lebanese concerns"⁴⁸ While still a part of a comprehensive Middle East approach, Lebanon was becoming an integral part.

Congressional leadership continued to be engaged in shaping US policy toward Lebanon under the Bush administration. More congressional hearings followed the 1997 ones when former president Amin Gemayel spoke, including one in 2003 when General Aoun was the key witness. The result was the passing of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003. The act was signed into public law by the president on December 12, 2003, and became Public Law No. 108-175. This law aims "to halt Syrian support for terrorism, end its occupation of Lebanon, stop its development of weapons of mass destruction, cease its illegal importation of Iraqi oil, and hold Syria

⁴⁷ Press Briefing, May 3, 2003, Beirut, Lebanon. The text of the press briefing was published by the US Department of State.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

accountable for its role in the Middle East, and for other purposes.”⁴⁹ The implications of this law would be discussed further in Chapter V.

The Bush administration was also actively advocating Lebanese independence and sovereignty in the international community. Together with France, the US sponsored UN Security Council Resolution 1559, calling for “the strict respect of Lebanon’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence under the sole and exclusive authority of the government of Lebanon throughout Lebanon.”⁵⁰ Specifically aimed at trying to prevent an impending parliamentary vote on a constitutional amendment to permit Syrian-backed Lebanese president Emile Lahoud to extend his term, the resolution stated the Lebanese presidential election should be “free and fair ... according to Lebanese constitutional rules devised without foreign interference or influence.”⁵¹ Despite the resolution, Lebanon’s parliament still voted to amend their constitution to permit Lahoud to stay another three years.

F. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LEBANON

In the years following the 1983 Beirut bombings, US policy toward Lebanon changed from full support of Lebanon’s sovereignty and independence to acquiescing to Syrian hegemony over the country. Faced with the possibility of confronting terrorism, the US followed a cautious approach and largely subsumed US interests in Lebanon to US interests in a broader Middle East peace process. In the process, Lebanon was largely ignored in favor of appeasing Syria. I do not believe that was the right path to take and I believe the US lost an opportunity in the 1980’s and 1990’s to shape Middle East politics.

The historic and strategic importance of Lebanon remained the same before and after the 1983 bombings. Lebanon’s importance geographically never changed, it still presented strategic opportunities for the US. It was still a potential gateway to the Arab world (through the Mediterranean) with seaports

⁴⁹ Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003.

⁵⁰ UN Security Council Resolution 1559, September 2, 2004.

⁵¹ Ibid.

and airports that were ideal forward operating bases and ports of debarkation. Lebanon could still strengthen US strategic position in the Levant and could widen US influence in the Mediterranean front, and could better serve US interests in the global war on terror.

Lebanon maintains the historical basis and institutions to be potentially stable, democratic, and friendly to the West. It is widely believed that the only US interest in the Middle East is oil. While Lebanon is not an oil producing country and Lebanon did not constitute a strategic interest because of oil, there are still economic interests. A stable and democratic Lebanon with a free market economy is a potential intermediary between the West and the Middle East nations. Lebanon served the role of a merchant nation before and it could fit in to that role again. The US made a commitment toward spreading democracy, most especially in the Middle East. As I argued in the previous chapter, Lebanon is still the best candidate and arguably a less costly way of propagating democratic peace. Democracy in Lebanon would be a substantial step in winning the war on terrorism.

Many argued that US failure to confront terrorism after the 1983 Beirut bombings emboldened terrorism and the use of terrorist tactics. Scott Dodd and Peter Smolowitz stated that while the “Beirut bombing taught the United States more about protecting troops and picking battles,” the “1983 Beirut bombing began a new era of terror.”⁵² They argued: “The bombing drove the military from its peacekeeping mission in Lebanon and provided a blueprint for attacking Americans. The retreat of U.S. forces inspired Osama bin Laden and sent an unintended message to the Arab world that enough body bags would prompt Western withdrawal, not retaliation.”⁵³

Dodd and Smolowitz quoted John Lehman, the Secretary of the Navy during the 1983 bombing, as saying “There’s no question it was a major cause of

⁵² Scott Dodd and Peter Smolowitz, “1983 Beirut Bombing Began New Era of Terror,” *Charlotte Observer*, Oct 21, 2003.

⁵³ Ibid.

9-11; we told the world that terrorism succeeds.”⁵⁴ Robin Wright agrees with Lehman’s statements. She characterizes the bombings as “pure terror” and “the seeds that we now see played out in so many countries in so many parts of the Islamic world.”⁵⁵ She stated that the redeployment of the Marines constituted a “cut and run” approach and “showed that extremist tactics can be effective in intimidating nations to leave.”⁵⁶ Osama bin Laden reportedly told ABC News in 1998 that American soldiers were “paper tigers,” and that “Marines fled after two explosions.”⁵⁷

Until Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan in 2001, US responses to terrorism were minimal and generally reflected a “cut and run” policy and avoidance of the military option. Terrorists attacked the US embassy in Kuwait in 1984, hijacked TWA Flight 847 in 1985, taking hostages and killing a sailor, exploded Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland in 1988, killing 270, bombed the World Trade Center in 1993, killing six and wounding hundreds, bombed the US military base in Saudi Arabia in 1996, killing 19 and wounding 370, attacked the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, killing 307, and struck the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000, killing 17 sailors.

I agree with Wright, Dodd, Smolowitz, and Lehman, but only on a theoretical level. Direct connections between the 1983 Beirut bombings and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US can only be posited, not proven, at this point. However, the lack of engagement on the US part contributed to Lebanon’s status as a weak state without effective control over its entire territory, making it a potential theater for terrorism.

The Bush administration’s actions after the September 11, 2001 bombings greatly affected its actions in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Wright’s remarks are taken from CNN interview during the 20th anniversary of the Beirut bombings. Wright is a journalist who was covering Beirut during the bombings. She is also the author of the book *Sacred Rage: The Wrath of Militant Islam*.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Scott Dodd and Peter Smolowitz, “1983 Beirut Bombing Began New Era of Terror,” *Charlotte Observer*, Oct 21, 2003.

region as a whole. It could also be a critical juncture for US policy toward Lebanon, an opportunity that could pave the way for a new path of engagement and better serve US strategic goals. It is imperative the Bush administration take a closer look at its policies toward Lebanon and not miss this opportunity.

There are two controversial issues confronting the Bush administration and US-Lebanon relations. Both are directly related to the global war on terrorism. The first is the Islamic group Hezbollah. Hezbollah was widely linked to the Beirut bombings and using terrorist tactics. Hezbollah, its transformation to a political force in Lebanon and its implications to US foreign policy toward Lebanon, are discussed in the next chapter. The second issue is the implementation of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003. While the initiative came from the legislature, its implementation rests with the executive. Both the Clinton and the Bush administrations were initially opposed to such legislation. Bush signed this into law in December 2003; major issues and disagreements between Congress and the Bush administration remain regarding its implementation. These are elaborated in Chapter V.

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IV. THE BEGINNING AND THE ONGOING TRANSFORMATION OF LEBANON'S "HEZBOLLAH," THE PARTY OF GOD

A. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. State Department's "Pattern of Global Terrorism 2003" identifies four Middle East nations — Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria — as state sponsors of terrorism. Two of these four, Iran and Syria, are widely linked to Lebanon, a nation the US State Department considers problematic for its refusal to take actions against terrorist elements in its country. Foremost of these terrorist elements is Hezbollah. According to Deputy Secretary of State Richard, Hezbollah and not al-Qaeda "may well be the A-team of international terrorism."⁵⁸

On the other hand, the Lebanese government insists Hezbollah is not a terrorist organization. Hezbollah contends its purpose is resistance to the Israeli occupation. Together they point to Hezbollah's work in the community and successes in parliamentary and local elections as proofs that Hezbollah is now heavily entrenched in the Lebanese political system and have gained considerable stake in the democratic process for it to be a terrorist group.

This chapter will trace the transformation of Hezbollah's ideology and its views regarding revolution — its shift from nonviolent political Islamism to more radical strains of Islamist activism in the 80's and 90's and its gradual shift back to political Islamism in the late 90's to today. This chapter will track the changes — from its beginnings in Imam Sayyid Musa al-Sadr's ideology and the Amal movement, to its revolutionary ideology in Sheikh Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah and Ayatollah Khomeini and manifested in its positions during the Lebanese Civil War; and finally to its evolution as a legitimate political party, actively participating in and accepted in the Lebanese social and political systems.

⁵⁸ Ralph De Toledano, "Hezbollah Emerging as the Terrorist A-Team," *Insight on the News* 20 Issue 7 (March 2004): 56.

It is important to take note of these changes in Hezbollah, for they reveal golden opportunities for policy makers to re-evaluate their positions in Middle East politics and valuable in tackling the larger issue of contending with Shi'ite fundamentalism while pursuing stated US national security strategy of propagating liberal democracy and free enterprise in the Middle East.

B. FROM QUIETISM TO RADICALISM

Radical Shi'ite fundamentalism in Lebanon would have been very unlikely prior to the 1960's. Pursuing ideas such as the violent overthrow of government, forceful demand for equal representation, and revolution in the Marxist sense were simply not in Lebanese Shi'ite tradition. For centuries, these Shi'ites were taught that their survival depended on maintaining the restraint imposed on them by their religion — faith should be kept separate from politics since politics will contaminate the religion. Religious leaders were not expected to rule, so as not to antagonize ruling government; but instead, they were expected to concentrate on religious doctrines and keeping extremist ideas out of the community.

The Shi'ites were cautious and quiescent to ensure their unity and survival. They kept their unity through their communal grief and quiescence, following the example of their fourth Imam, Imam Zayn al Abidin, who, after his father Husayn was massacred in Karbala, ensured the survival of the Shi'ites and their religion by accepting the realities that they were no match against their opponents, the Islamic (Sunni) state based in Damascus.

The Shi'ites of Lebanon had learned to live in the shadows of alien powers, even fellow Muslims (Sunni) to ensure their survival. They were good citizens, not causing trouble but preaching harmony and living a pious life, mostly in agriculture. Their government however took advantage and took the quiet Shi'ite community for granted. The Shi'ites were left in poverty; their social and political life seriously deteriorated. But in those conditions, they still accepted their fate and unified in their communal grief; until Imam Sayyid Musa al-Sadr came and showed them the possibility of living a pious, but better life, in a modern world.

Imam Musa al-Sadr took the position of Islamic Shi'ite religious leader in the southern city of Tyre in 1960. He was not considered an Imam then but his followers soon bestowed him the title, despite a foreign birthplace. He came from Iran, a place called Qum, where it was prophesied that a man of faith would come from to lead a rebellion. He was, however, of Lebanese ancestry; and claimed a distinguished line of descent in both his maternal and paternal lineage. He was well educated in the faith, well traveled, and very charismatic. From the beginning, he immediately felt something was simply not right in Lebanon. He quickly saw the inequalities of the Lebanese confessional system, and the grave social, political, and living conditions the Shi'ites of Lebanon were facing.

Imam al-Sadr embarked on improving the life of the Shi'ites. He gave them hope by calling them by a new name — Shi'ites of Lebanon; and linked them with a broader Shi'ite community outside Lebanon (in Iran and Iraq). Then he worked within the Lebanese system to try to elevate their social and living conditions. He was distinguished by his political openness, especially towards Christians, and for founding many social institutions, vocational schools, and health clinics.

The Shi'ites were underrepresented in government and they did not have the political voice the other two sects, Christians and Sunni Muslims, enjoyed in their Higher Councils. So he founded the Higher Islamic Shi'ite Council in 1969 and became its chairman.⁵⁹ To improve the standing of Shi'ites, he worked side by side with Christian priests and bishops, and even gave a sermon in a Christian church. He also founded the "Movement of the Deprived" to get the government to address the needs of the Shi'ites in the rural areas. He worked tirelessly to improve the social, political, and living conditions of the Shi'ites. In the process, he provided a different Shi'ite ideology from what the Shi'ites traditionally believed.

Imam al-Sadr showed the Shi'ites that it was acceptable to live not in constant grief and repression and instead to strive for a better life. In a way, he

⁵⁹ It was here in the Higher Islamic Shiite Council where he came to be known as Imam.

provided “militancy” when there was only quiescence. Ajami described it as seeking “to change the stagnant Shia tradition, to strip it of its sorrow and quiescence, to make it come to terms with the world.”⁶⁰ His ideology, however, rested within the framework of the law and cooperation with the government, and the unity of Lebanon as an independent state.⁶¹ He called for the Shi’ites to look within and find their rightful place in the Lebanese state by working through the Lebanese system, not overthrowing it.

Unfortunately Imam al-Sadr mysteriously vanished in August 1978 during a visit to Libya. To date, nobody has publicly stated what really happened although many blame Qadafi. His legacy however remained and greatly influenced the birth of Hezbollah.

C. IRANIAN INFLUENCE AND SHEIKH FADLALLAH

Hezbollah as an organized entity was not born during the time of Imam al-Sadr. It was not until the early middle part of the Lebanese Civil War when Hezbollah emerged. With help from Iran, Hezbollah was founded in 1982 during Israel’s invasion of Lebanon.

What Imam al-Sadr founded was a movement called Amal. Amal, which also means “hope,” is an acronym for *Afwaj al Muqawamah al Lubnanya*, the Units of the Lebanese Resistance. It was intended to be an auxiliary to the Lebanese army in the south; and followed Imam al-Sadr’s moderate ideology. In time however, it became apparent to many Shi’ites that Amal’s moderate stance was not gaining them any ground, and in fact losing them the civil war to a foreign entity, the Israelis.⁶² Many turned to Hezbollah.

⁶⁰ Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 219.

⁶¹ Imam al-Sadr was just and he advocated peaceful means. But he was not naïve; he was preparing an armed militia at the same time that he was preaching for peace and unity. He was well aware of the realities of the civil war and he warned against Israeli aggression.

⁶² Amal was the main organization representing the Shiites. Hezbollah emerged from that group.

Hezbollah emerged with an immediate goal of forcing the Israeli military out of southern Lebanon. The long-term goal, however, was greater and radical. It is to mimic the success of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution and create an Islamic state in Lebanon.

With Imam al-Sadr's disappearance, Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah gained most of the imam's influence and following. Under his spiritual leadership, Shiite ideology became more militant. Sheikh Fadlallah came with a more radical method — purist, and imposing strict order of zeal and conformity. Many Shi'ites saw this as the only way, especially in Lebanon's environment of antagonistic sects. The Shi'ites of Lebanon needed to rule their own state, an Islamic state, patterned after Iran, which had staged a successful rebellion. Many Shi'ites' ideology was thus transformed from traditional political quietism, to Imam al-Sadr's "enlightened" way, and then to Sheikh Fadlallah's "doctrine of rebellion and confrontation."

To Sheikh Fadlallah and his followers, the change in doctrine was justified. Islam has a tradition of "enjoining the good and forbidding the evil." He preached that in forbidding evil, the Shi'ites could resort to armed power to change social and political conditions; the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions did so. Much more, he preached that God loves strength and force; that the strong pious person was more pleasing to God than the weak pious one. There was a need for the acquisition of power for maintaining the proper conditions for living a good and pious life, and for creating and defending a Muslim order. These were not traditional Shi'ite ideas; but many embraced them.

As for separating religion from politics, the community was not deviating from religion when they interfere in politics — Muhammad was both a ruler and religious guide, the Shi'ites' Imam Ali fulfilled the same. As for the quiescence of the fourth Imam, Imam Zayn Al Abidin, and the Imams who followed him, Sheikh Fadlallah maintained that the Imams knew beforehand that struggle was doomed to failure so they counseled against it for the good of the community. He believes that the avoidance of struggle cannot be a permanent response to injustice; and

that it was the Shi'ites' duty to fight for the community when the chances were right. Under Sheikh Fadlallah, a Lebanese Shi'ism with a revolutionary philosophy emerged, embraced by Hezbollah.

D. THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR

Hezbollah's revolutionary philosophy can be clearly seen in the positions the organization took during the Lebanese Civil War. The increasingly desperate economic situation, combined with the revolutionary ideology gaining prevalence, led to radical positions.

By the mid-1980's, the Lebanese Civil War effectively collapsed the Lebanese economy. Its gross domestic product was one third its original level, the national income per capita was barely one tenth of what it was in the early 1980's, the rate of exchange for the Lebanese pound plummeted against the dollar and other currencies, and the reserves were depleted. Unemployment was up, emigration was down (significantly reducing income from remittances), real wages were considerably down, and prospects for industrialization were nil.

The grave economic conditions, together with deteriorated social conditions fueled the never-ending internal war (that has been going on since the mid 1970's) between the warring factions—the leftist antigovernment pan Arab camp, the Lebanese National Movement, against the conservative highly nationalistic rightist camp, the Lebanese Front.

Hezbollah was in the pan Arab camp. It was allied with Amal, the Progressive Socialist Party, the Syrian National Socialist Party, the Independent Nasserists, the Lebanese Communist Party, and the Ba'ath Socialist Party. They were fighting against the Kata'ib, the National Liberal Party, and the Zghorta Liberation Army. Within each group, total alliance was far from solid; their goals were fragmented.

Hezbollah's end goal was an Islamic Republic of Lebanon. To achieve that goal, the group advocated the following positions:

- Overthrow Maronite control of government

- Equal representation
- Eradicate Western influence
- Full scale resistance against Israel
- Close relations with Syria
- Support for the Palestinian cause
- Prevent the Palestinian Liberation Organization from moving back in to Lebanon
- Close ties with the Islamic regime of Iran.

The first and foremost goal was the overthrow of Maronite control over the government and lands of Lebanon. For Hezbollah, the grave economic and social conditions proved the government's gross incompetence. They held the Maronites responsible for the civil unrest and the eruption of violence. They also considered the government corrupt. Further, the Maronite government was seen as cooperating with the Israelis.

The government's inability to provide basic social services led the Shi'ites to organize their own village cells and communities in order to satisfy basic needs. It is in these communities that Hezbollah gained prominence. It provided social services, security and protection that the Maronite government could or would not provide. These communities later came under Hezbollah control.

On the equal representation issue, Hezbollah supported the pan Arab camp's demand for the revision of the unwritten National Pact of 1943 to reflect the degree of influence that the Shi'ite community, the "real" Lebanese (in their view), should hold. This meant revising not only the words of the National Pact but also ensuring equitable representation. They wanted to make clear that 'Lebanon is an Arab Country, a founder member of the Arab League, and is bound by all the obligations of that membership.' The connotations of these words are tremendous as they imply full Arab membership and the eradication of western influence. The National Pact of 1943 implied Lebanon as an Arab country with a Western aspect.

The actual governing of the nation was also disputed. While Hezbollah continued its quest for an Islamic state, the realities of what it could negotiate led it to support lesser goals. Hezbollah supported changing the ratio of Christian and Muslim representation in the parliament from 6:5 in favor of Christians (as taken from the outdated and questionable 1932 census) to at least equal representation between Christians and Muslims. This was because the Muslims were believed to be the majority in population and thus entitled to equal representation with the Christians. The change in representation would flow down to other areas of the government also, in addition to reconstituting the Lebanese Army to reflect this representation.

Hezbollah had maintained a hard line approach against the Israelis from the start. It was one of the main reasons why the organization broke away from Amal. The arrival of Israeli soldiers was first seen as liberation — Israel was helpful in driving the Palestinians away from Lebanese Shi'ite land — and Amal tried to prevent Israeli attacks that would kill innocent Shi'ites. Many interpreted this as willingness to cooperate with the enemy, and weakened Amal's support among the Shi'ites.

Hezbollah rejected any compromise with the Lebanese Christians, Israel, and the West. It advocated full resistance against Israel because they believed Israel displaced the Palestinians from their land, causing the Palestinians to take refuge in Lebanon and making it their base of resistance. The result was Israel continuously attacking Lebanon. Israel allegedly also had ulterior motives on Lebanese land and resources.⁶³

Hezbollah's pro Arab stance brought it close to Syria, who represented the greater Arab Muslim world in Lebanon. Hezbollah considered Lebanon part of the Muslim world and so it supported Arab unity and nationalism. The Palestinian cause was a central issue in the pan Arab camp; they wanted the Palestinians to have their own state. Hezbollah, however, did not want Lebanon to be the killing fields so they resented both the Israelis and the Palestinians, especially their

⁶³ I am referring here to Lebanese water — Israel attempted to annex part of southeast Lebanon to control the Wazzani; they continued to pump water out of it.

military arm, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). They wanted the PLO out; and they wanted to prevent the PLO from moving back in.⁶⁴

The Islamic regime of Iran was important to Hezbollah. They looked to Iran as a model for Lebanon and practiced extreme loyalty to Imam Khomeini of Iran. Hezbollah advocated an Islamic Republic with close ties to Shi'ite brethren in Iran. Like Iran, its goals went so far as eradicating all western influence and promoting an Islamic revolution in the world.

The Ta'if Accords in 1989 ended the Lebanese Civil War with no clear victory for anybody. Heavily influenced by the Syrian government and the Arab League, the Lebanese Parliament adopted the Arab League's political reform proposal that became the basis for the Ta'if Accords. Under this agreement, Christians and Muslims are provided equal representation in Parliament. Preserving the Lebanese confessional system of democracy, the Presidency remained a Christian position; the office of the Prime Minister remained a Sunni Muslim position; and the Speaker of Parliament a Shi'ite. The different Lebanese factions reluctantly accepted the Ta'if Accords; fighting ended and Lebanon's reconstruction started. As for Hezbollah, it continued its struggle with Israel (and the United States) and vowed to continue until all Lebanese land is back in Lebanese hands.

The position Hezbollah advocated during the war confirmed Hezbollah's transformation from the traditionally quiescent and submissive Shi'ite of the past to the extremist and radical Hezbollah Shi'ite of the civil war. It showed a more politically dynamic Shi'ite, aware of the social conditions of his/her country and ready to act on this awareness. Fouad Ajami stated, the "political tradition of submission gave way to a messianic movement; Shia clerics who once summoned men to worship, who monitored ritual, were summoning men to arms."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ The Israelis eventually drove the PLO out.

⁶⁵ Ajami, p. 191.

E. FROM RADICALISM TO POLITICAL ISLAMISM

Fifteen years after the end of the civil war, Hezbollah seems to have gradually made the transition from extremist ideology to more moderate political activism. The rhetoric may still be the same, with its leadership shouting “Death to America.” A closer look however reveals a Hezbollah heavily entrenched in the Lebanese political system and providing for the needs of its constituents rather than exporting its revolutionary ideals.

Hezbollah is now deeply entrenched in the society. A study by JoeMarie Fecci, concluded in the late 1990’s, found that “in Lebanon Hezbollah is well known and respected for its extensive social welfare and development programs.”⁶⁶ She maintains “Hezbollah-affiliated associations have a reputation for honesty that stands out in a place where many of its counterparts are believed to be corrupt and inefficient.”⁶⁷ Hezbollah was able to penetrate into places where the government could not for various reasons; and provided services often in tandem with, or in cooperation with the government.

Fecci traced Hezbollah’s organized “production” of services with the creation of Jihad al Binna in 1988, an association meant to prevent the exodus of Shi’ites from the Beirut suburbs when their homes were being bombarded as a result of the civil war. The association spread to other areas where social services were severely lacking. The Jihad al Binna and other Hezbollah associations provide education, health care, assistance to victims of conflicts, and economic development.

Currently, Jihad al Binna has been focusing on the agrarian sector, an important one since 40 percent of Lebanese workers work in agriculture. It established two centers in the western Bekaa valley that provides classes for cutting production costs and efficient agriculture, techniques for beekeeping, as

⁶⁶ JoeMarie Fecci, “Letter from Lebanon: As Hezbollah Hastens Israeli Withdrawal It Integrates Itself into South Lebanon’s Economic Life,” *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* XVIII, Issue 8 (December 1999): 26.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 26.

well as laboratories and nurseries for soil testing and experimenting with other crops. It also extends credits for fertilizers, seeds, and other agricultural needs.

Hezbollah also runs many schools, orphanages, and religious institutions; a lot of them funded by Iran. Its members also own and maintain banks, radio and television stations, as well as newspapers, in addition to providing law and order. In a sense it has developed an Islamic parallel sector for its “territories” within Lebanon; this sector may have become a viable alternative to the state, especially in fulfilling their constituents’ economic self-interests.

Providing social services is not new to Hezbollah; it has just been more efficient in doing it than the state. It has however grown leaps and bounds in the political arena. That is not surprising considering political survival has been a paramount goal from the start. In the early 1990, a declassified secret message from the American Embassy in London to the US Department of State quoted an informant well connected in Iran and Hezbollah, whose name is still classified, to have said: “the main issue for the Hezbollah is not ransom money or even relatives and friends in Israeli or Kuwaiti prisons. It is the future of Hezbollah as a political movement in Lebanon.”⁶⁸

Hezbollah was convinced that after the release of hostages (1990), Syria would destroy Hezbollah and leave Amal as the sole representative of the largest sect in Lebanon, the Shi’ites. This of course concerned Iran who had considerable investment in Hezbollah — funding its social services, schools, orphanages, and religious institutions, as well as militia training and support. To protect its political future, Hezbollah wanted a guarantee from Syria and the US that Hezbollah would remain a political force, and even demanded a cabinet position in government. It is not conclusive as to whether Syria and the US gave in to Hezbollah’s demands or provided specific guarantees. What has become obvious today though is that Hezbollah has become a political force in Lebanese politics.

⁶⁸ Declassified 231855ZMAR90 SECRET Message, US Embassy London to Secretary of State.

When the hostage situation in 1990 was eventually resolved, Hezbollah gained a foothold in the Lebanese political system via participation in parliamentary elections in 1992 and 1996. Hezbollah maintained between eight to twelve seats in Parliament (of the total 99) at all times.

While Hezbollah's success in national politics is very important, Hezbollah's participation in local politics is even more relevant. It is at the local level where constituents are closest to their representatives. It is here that people chose their leaders. Hamzeh contends "the very nature of municipal work — provision of services to the community — is a fundamental tenet of faith, and such work emphasizes the successfully Islamisation of all aspects of society, a goal that the Islamists have emphasized since the late 1980s, instead of their commitment to the violent overthrow of their regimes."⁶⁹

Hezbollah has proven politically adept at the local level as well. Its active participation in the 1998 municipal election (held for the first time in 35 years), firmly entrenched it in the Lebanese political system. Its overwhelming victory in the 2004 municipal elections further galvanized its legitimacy in Lebanese politics.

F. CONCLUSION

De Toledano, citing European Intelligence sources, reports Hezbollah maintains "5,000 trained terrorists in Lebanon and Syria alone, armed with some 10,000 missiles, tanks, and anti-aircraft artillery," as well as "another 15,000 to 20,000 members in the United States, Latin America, Europe and East Asia;" and an "operational budget of \$500 million."⁷⁰ Its familiar rhetoric of "Death to America" implies these resources will be used for terrorist purposes.

On the other hand, Lebanese government officials maintain Hezbollah is a legitimate political party and no longer a terrorist organization as the United States State Department claims. I asked the Lebanese Ambassador to the US,

⁶⁹ Hamzeh, p. 739.

⁷⁰ De Toledano, p. 56.

Mr. Farid Abboud during a guest lecture at UC Berkeley what is the official relationship between Hezbollah and the government and he answered “coordinating.” He and many others in Lebanon do not consider Hezbollah a terrorist organization. Mr. Farid Abboud, a Christian, also emphatically defended the Shi’ite Hezbollah as a legitimate political party, engaged in political work and not terrorist activities.

A closer study of Hezbollah’s ideology, however, shows a shift from political Islamism to more radical strains of Islamist activism in the 80’s and 90’s and then a gradual shift back to political Islamism in the late 90’s to today. Regardless of the radical rhetoric, Hezbollah’s political Islamism shows well in its social services organizations and most especially in its political participation. Hezbollah has evolved to a legitimate political party, an active, accepted participant in the Lebanese social and political system. An Islamic state may still be the end goal but the means to that is no longer defined by a Marxist, Shariati or Khomeini ideology of violent revolution; but rather an “Islamic revolution” in the Mawdudi definition, a gradual change from within.

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V. THE SYRIA ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY RESTORATION ACT OF 2003

A. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will explore and analyze the second most relevant issue affecting US-Lebanese relations, the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003. This act was passed in the US House of Representatives with an overwhelming bipartisan majority, only four of the 435-member House of Representatives cast a dissenting vote. The US Senate vote was equally overwhelmingly bipartisan, with a final vote of 89 yeas to 4 nays. On December 12, 2003, the president's signature made it Public Law No. 108-175.

The Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (SALSRA) was originally a bipartisan bill introduced on April 18, 2002 by Senators Barbara Boxer and Rick Santorum in the Senate (S. 2215), and Representatives Dick Armey and Elliot Engel in the House of Representatives (H.R. 4483), as the "Syria Accountability Act." It was an updated version of H.R. 2056, the "Lebanon Independence Restoration Act of 1999," introduced in June 1999 by Representative Michael P. Forbes.

The SALSRA holds Syria accountable for causing serious international security problems in the Middle East, and demands Syria end its support for terrorists, end its acquisition and production of weapons of mass destruction and long-range ballistic missiles, prevent terrorists and weapons from entering Iraq, and pull Syrian troops out of Lebanon. To force Syria to meet these demands, the US Congress requires the president to impose a number of diplomatic pressures and economic measures, including an export ban, a ban on sales of dual-use technology, prohibition of operations by US businesses, limits on Syrian airline flights within the US, reduction of diplomatic contacts, and freeze on Syrian assets in the US.

In this chapter, I will explore the implications of the SALSRA to Lebanon and to US foreign policy toward Lebanon. I will focus on the one US demand

most relevant to US-Lebanese relations, the pull out of Syrian military personnel from Lebanon. I will also analyze the implications of the SALSRA for the Bush administration, a non-participant in its creation but given the task of implementing it, and its implications on other US national security interests.

It is important to understand the implications of the SALSRA for they reveal opportunities for US policy makers to evaluate current positions in Middle East politics. Evaluation of these positions is necessary and valuable in winning the global war on terrorism and pursuing the stated US national security strategy of propagating liberal democracy and free enterprise in the Middle East.

B. THE SALSRA AND LEBANON

The SALSRA called for adherence to UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 520 that stipulates "strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon through the Lebanese Army throughout Lebanon."⁷¹ UNSCR 520 was originally approved in 1982 and its language applied to Israel and Syria to completely withdraw from Lebanon, including all their military, paramilitary, and security forces. Israel withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000, while the Syrian military remained.⁷² The US finds "Syria is in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 520 (September 17, 1982) through its continued occupation of Lebanese territory and its encroachment upon Lebanon's political independence."⁷³

The US Congress demanded as a statement of policy that "the Government of Syria should immediately declare its commitment to completely withdraw its armed forces, including military, paramilitary, and security forces,

⁷¹ UN Security Council Resolution 520, September 17, 1982.

⁷² Israel has not withdrawn from the Shabaa Farms. Whether the Shabaa Farms belongs to Lebanon or Syria is disputed by the UN, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. The UN Secretary General, however, has certified Israel's pull out from Lebanon in accordance with UNSCR 425.

⁷³ The Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, December 2003.

from Lebanon, and set a firm timetable for such withdrawal.”⁷⁴ The new statement of policy puts the burden of action on Syria to abide by UN resolutions and the Ta’if Accords in order to help Lebanon regain its sovereignty and independence.

Stephen Zunes argues Lebanese sovereignty was not in the US policymakers mind in the first place, because if they did, “they would have demanded that Israel abide by UN Security Council resolution 520 and nine other resolutions demanding Israeli withdrawal ... prior to Israel’s long-overdue pullout in May 2000.”⁷⁵ I agree that the US should have done more and should have engaged Lebanon in the past. I argue, however, that the environment then – the frame of mind of US leaders – was still caught in a dependent path of ignoring Lebanon, a trajectory of policy which was brought about by the 1983 Beirut bombings. As I argued in the previous chapters, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 presented an opportunity for a different path of engagement that the US seems to be following now.

The most visible sign of Syrian hegemony over Lebanon is the number of Syrian military personnel operating inside Lebanon. Abdelnour and Gambill estimated that from a troop strength numbering 35,000 to 40,000 Syrian soldiers in Lebanon in 2000, the number is now down to 16,000.⁷⁶ It seems there was a conscious decision by Syrian President Bashar Assad, who ascended to power in July 2000, to honor Syria’s obligations under the Ta’if Accords to redeploy Syrian troops. This decision took place before the passage of the SALSRA and was most likely a response to the growing overt Lebanese opposition to Syrian hegemony, as well as a reciprocal response to Israeli troop withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000; and possibly as a response to pressure from the Bush administration. In any case, the Syrian redeployment happened quietly, incrementally, and gradually. With the publicity that came along with the passage

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Stephen Zunes, “The Syrian Accountability Act and the Triumph of Hegemony,” *Foreign Policy in Focus* (October 2003): 5.

⁷⁶ Ziad Abdelnour and Gary Gambill, “Syria’s Fourth Redeployment from Lebanon,” *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* 5 No. 7 (July 2003).

of the SALSRA, it is now unlikely that the Syrian military would pull out completely since doing so may be construed as giving in to foreign pressure.

While the SALSRA focuses on the Syrian military, the real strength of Syria's hegemony may have remained hidden. The Syrian military's withdrawal from Lebanon arguably only has limited effect on Syria's political hegemony over Lebanon. Abdelnour and Gambill state that "Whatever the extent of future troops reductions by Syria, they are unlikely to directly impact its control of Lebanon, which depends more on Syria's plainclothes secret police and political patronage networks than on the size of its occupation army."⁷⁷

The act also calls for Lebanon (and Syria) to enter into serious bilateral negotiations with Israel for the sake of peace in the region. This goal is mostly aimed at Syria and not Lebanon. It tries to force Syria to let Lebanon act as an independent state that is able to conclude its own treaties. But with Syria exercising political hegemony over Lebanon, it would not be realistic to think Lebanon could enter into any serious bilateral negotiations with Israel. It could certainly be overridden by Syria, similar to the May 17, 1983 Lebanon-Israel agreement. The Lebanese government then was forced to abrogate that agreement that could have ended the Lebanese civil war while the Reagan administration stood by helpless.

Another provision of the SALSRA pertains to the status of Hezbollah, a group listed in the US list of terrorist groups, and the deployment of Lebanese forces in south Lebanon. The SALSRA states that

It is the sense of Congress that the Government of Lebanon should deploy the Lebanese armed forces to all areas of Lebanon, including South Lebanon, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 520 (September 17, 1982), in order to assert the sovereignty of the Lebanese state over all of its territory, and should evict all terrorist and foreign forces from southern Lebanon, including Hizballah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ The Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, December 2003.

While the sense of Congress is in accordance with a UN resolution, it is somewhat awkward to see such wording in another state's public law for the following reasons. First, the act calls for Lebanese sovereignty and yet it turns around and "suggests" (as evidenced by the use of the word "should") how the Lebanese government could perform internal state actions, national defense and protecting its borders. The suggestion appears to be an intrusion in another state's sovereignty. Secondly, it again ignores the reality of the Lebanese situation, particularly, Syrian political hegemony.

Not surprisingly, the implementation of the SALSRA is not well received in the Syrian-backed Lebanese government. In March 2004 during a visit to the region, US Secretary of State Colin Powell called on Syria to fully withdraw its troops from Lebanon and encouraged Lebanon to extend its army to the south and provide security there. The response from Lebanese President Emile Lahoud was not encouraging. Lahoud stated that "the Syrian presence in Lebanon is an internal and regional stabilizing factor" and stressed that "Syria helped Lebanon safeguard its unity, rebuild its national army and facilitated the liberation of most of the South of the country occupied by Israel."⁷⁹

As far as the presence of Hezbollah and the absence of the Lebanese army in south Lebanon, the US lawmakers and the governments of Syria and Lebanon do not see eye to eye on this issue. As we explored in the previous chapter, Hezbollah has transformed and has become fully entrenched in the political process. Much more, Hezbollah has become popular with the Lebanese people that actions against it would likely risk instability again in the Levant.

Finally, the SALSRA also limited the provision of "humanitarian and educational assistance to the people of Lebanon only through appropriate private, nongovernmental organizations and appropriate international organizations, until such time as the Government of Lebanon asserts sovereignty and control over all of its territory and borders and achieves full political

⁷⁹ *The Daily Star* Online Editor, "Powell to Syria: Leave Lebanon, Urges Withdrawal of troops," *The Daily Star*, March 22, 2004.

independence.”⁸⁰ This part of SALSRA serves as motivation for the Lebanese government to reject Syrian political hegemony. However, it also seems to doubt the Lebanese government’s ability to conduct state business.

There is also the risk that US assistance falls to the wrong hands. The criteria for determining an appropriate nongovernmental organization are not clear. Amy Hawthorne, in her study of the Clinton administration’s democracy promotion efforts, finds that ‘the U.S. sometimes focused on institutions that many Arabs themselves considered ineffective, such as ossified political parties or “non-governmental” organizations whose leaders had been co-opted by government officials.’⁸¹

C. IMPLICATIONS TO US NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIES

Finally, the United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world.⁸²

-- President George W. Bush

The overwhelming support in the legislative branch suggests the American public, through its representatives in Congress, is on board with the Bush administration’s neoconservative foreign policy vision – a world full of independent, sovereign, democratic states are more likely to bring peace and stability. The passage of the SALSRA suggests American unity, at least in its policy toward Syria and Lebanon, in following US national security strategies of promoting liberal democracy and free enterprise. The democratization of Lebanon is also in line with that vision.

⁸⁰ The Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, December 2003.

⁸¹ Amy Hawthorne, “Do We Want Democracy in the Middle East?” *Foreign Service Journal*, (February 2001): 47.

⁸² The quote is from the introduction to the US National Security Strategy, September 17, 2002.

Stephen Zunes does not see it as building democracy but a US unilateralist tendency. He argues that SALSRA confirms the full acceptance within the US legislative branch of the Bush administration's unilateralist worldview. He also provides an answer to why it was passed with overwhelming bipartisan majority. He stated:

The answer may lie in today's unipolar world system where the United States, rather than supporting comprehensive and law-based means of promoting regional peace and security, insists upon the right to impose unilateral demands targeted at specific countries based largely upon ideological criteria. As the one-sidedness of the vote on this resolution indicates, both the Republicans and the Democrats—including the most liberal wing of the party—now accept this vision of U.S. foreign policy.⁸³

Zunes' argument is an interesting one since the Bush administration reluctantly signed on to this legislation. The BBC news reported that "President Bush has sought to distance himself from the law, hinting he might waive some of its measures in the interests of national security."⁸⁴ In a statement during the signing of the act into law, the president was quoted as saying "My approval of the act does not constitute my adoption of the various statements of policy in the act as US foreign policy."⁸⁵

Judging by the president's comments, it seems the Bush administration is seeking to lower expectations of a successful outcome from the SALSRA while also affirming that US foreign policy making is an executive branch responsibility, and not a legislative one. The SALSRA is a legislative branch initiative while foreign policy implementation is in the executive's purview.

It is not that the Bush administration opposes the act; it is the lawmakers' misunderstanding of Middle East politics and the intrusion in the conduct of foreign policy that is the cause of concern. The act imposes actions on Syria and

⁸³ Stephen Zunes, "The Syrian Accountability Act and the Triumph of Hegemony," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (October 2003): 1.

⁸⁴ The statement was reported in the BBC news, December 13, 2003.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Lebanon that may not be realistic. It also imposes actions on the executive branch that may undermine overall US foreign policy efforts in the Middle East.

The Bush administration's reluctance to aggressively champion the full implementation of the SALSRA is not without reason. Forcing its implementation has serious implications to the global war on terrorism and greatly affects the dynamics of the national security strategy of propagating liberal democracy and free enterprise.

Claude Salhani argues the SALSRA "leads in the wrong direction in the fight against anti-American terrorists by escalating an unnecessary conflict in the Middle East that will only strengthen those who wish us harm."⁸⁶ He argues that "although the Syria Accountability Act provides the United States with a new collection of sticks with which to beat Damascus, there are precious few carrots to encourage continued cooperation by Syria in the fight against Al Qaeda."⁸⁷

The new collection of sticks, the consequences for failing to act, is far from overwhelming. Rania Abouzeid states the economic sanctions will not have the intended effect since trade between the US and Syria is relatively low at \$300 million a year and Syria will simply find other trading partners, particularly Europe.⁸⁸ Abouzeid reports Syria has been negotiating a partnership accord with the European Union that could potentially lead to the creation of a free-trade zone by 2010.⁸⁹

The threats of diplomatic pressure are also toothless. The US has been maintaining a diplomatic presence in Syria despite Syria's status as a state that sponsors terrorism. There is no evidence the Bush administration will drastically alter US diplomatic presence. Syria continues to be an important regional player in other US national security interests, specifically the Middle East peace plan

⁸⁶ Claude Salhani, "The Syria Accountability Act: Taking the Wrong Road to Damascus," *Policy Analysis* 512 (March 2004).

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Rania Abouzeid, "US Policy toward Syria Misguided," *aljazeera.net* (November 4, 2003). (<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/OC7DCF19-F9EE-44D8-8AA1-8AEC7844512F.htm>)

⁸⁹ Ibid.

and preserving stability in the region, maintaining Israel's security, and ensuring reliable access to inexpensive petroleum supply from the region. Confrontation with Syria will directly undermine those national security interests.

The Bush administration is placed in the unenviable position of balancing and prioritizing national security interests in the Middle East. Previous administrations chose to subsume US interests in Lebanon's independence, democracy, and sovereignty to an overall regional policy. While it is too early to tell if the Bush administration will soon follow, early indications suggest the Bush administration is traveling a different path in its policy toward Lebanon.

With the show of American unity, the SALSRA may have given the Bush administration the green light to fully follow a new path of engagement in Lebanon. However, it also necessitated an evaluation of US foreign policy toward Lebanon to ensure the SALSRA does not undermine the administration's efforts in the global war on terrorism, Middle East peace plan, and other national security interests. The administration must evaluate its foreign policy and determine a way where the SALSRA can be used to better serve US interests.

D. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SALSRA AND LEBANON

While at first glance, the goals and demands of the SALSRA on Lebanon seem to be reasonable, a careful analysis of the act shows there is not much Lebanon could do and shows the goals of this act may be unattainable at this time. The realities of Middle East politics, particularly Syria's hegemony over Lebanon, preclude the Lebanese government from acting, even if it wants to. In the process, Lebanon is again caught in the middle, between Syria with thousands of troops inside its territories, and the US whose intentions may be good but may not be able to back it up with real action. The US has followed a cut and run policy in the past.

On the brighter side, there are two issues brought about by the passage of the SALSRA that reveal an emerging new path in US-Lebanese relationship and greatly affect US foreign policy toward Lebanon. The first is the willingness to

engage in Lebanon's transition to a sovereign democratic state once more; and the second, the willingness to divorce US policy toward Lebanon with the broader and more comprehensive Middle East peace plan. Under the SALSRA, it became "the policy of the United States that the full restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity is in the national security interest of the United States," and that "Syria's obligation to withdraw from Lebanon is not conditioned upon progress in the Israeli-Syrian or Israeli-Lebanese peace process but derives from Syria's obligation under Security Council Resolution 520."⁹⁰

With the passage of SALSRA into US public law, both the executive and the legislative branches of the US government are now committed to Lebanon's independence, sovereignty, and transition to democracy. American solidarity on this issue is now fully affirmed, giving the Bush administration leverage in diplomatic negotiations with the international community. The US, for example, was able to collaborate with France to propose and ensure the passage of UNSCR 1559. In this resolution, the Security Council "declared its support for a free and fair presidential election in Lebanon conducted according to Lebanese constitutional rules devised without foreign interference or influence and, in that connection, called upon all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon."⁹¹ The language and the intent of UNSCR 1559 are very similar to the SALSRA.

The second positive issue from the SALSRA that affects foreign policy making toward Lebanon is the call for treating Lebanon's sovereignty and independence as a separate US national interest. This is relevant in that it breaks away from previous US administrations' practice of lumping together national interests and promulgating one overarching regional strategy. It suggests that the US has once again found Lebanon strategically important to

⁹⁰ The Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, December 2003.

⁹¹ UNSCR 1559, September 2, 2004. Despite the resolution, the Cabinet of Prime Minister Hariri still decided to amend Lebanon's constitution to permit the Syrian-backed Lebanese president to extend his term.

US national interests. It took over 20 years (since the 1983 Beirut bombings) and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, for the US to find a new path of engagement in its foreign policy toward Lebanon. This time, a cut and run policy is unlikely to return.

Previous actions by the Bush administration in Afghanistan and Iraq indicate that this administration will likely follow through with actions when it commits itself to a certain cause. The administration seems to be serious about its new strategy and has linked the global war on terrorism with freedom and spreading democracy. In his November 6 speech, the president said, "Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe, because in the long run stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty."⁹²

Treating Lebanon's independence and sovereignty as a separate US national security issue says the US is serious about its new strategy; it is committed to democracy in the Middle East; and Lebanon is a place to start. It took the enactment of the SALSRA to really show that commitment.

⁹² The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East," November 6, 2003.

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VI. CONCLUSION

A. PATH DEPENDENCE THEORY

Certain events matter. In the case of US foreign policy toward Lebanon, there are two particular events, or critical junctures, which matter most to both policymakers and students of policy making. The first happened in Beirut over twenty years ago and influenced US policymaking during the last two decades. It started a path dependent policy of largely ignoring the historical and strategic importance of Lebanon. The second happened over 9,000 kilometers from Beirut; it happened in the US and is poised to reverse the course paved by the first, providing an opportunity for the US to re-evaluate its relationship with a tiny but significant state in the Levant, Lebanon.

The first series of events occurred in Beirut – the 1983 bombings. These resulted in a “cut and run policy” that began a trajectory of policies favoring disengagement with Lebanon. Disengagement was an erroneous policy, I argue, because Lebanon was of strategic importance to US national security, an importance which remained after the bombings. Further, this policy of disengagement overlooked the democratic legacy of the country. Arguably, the path taken by the US contributed to the Lebanese state’s continued demise in the 1980’s, prolonged civil war, Syria’s political hegemony, and the flourishing of violent groups such as Hezbollah. It could also have affected the success of anti-terrorism policies worldwide.

The second series of events occurred on September 11, 2001 – the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The policies resulting from this act brought the US back to a policy of active engagement in the Middle East, taking the global war on terrorism away from US soil. It also resulted in the acceptance of a grand strategy of spreading liberal democracy and advocating free enterprise worldwide. More importantly for US-Lebanese relations, it gave the US an opportunity to change paths in its foreign policy and re-examine its relationship with the Levantine nation.

Whether the Bush administration will take the opportunity to fully change path is yet to be determined. Early indications are positive. How the Bush administration and future administrations proceed in the next few months regarding the two most controversial issues explored in this paper — Hezbollah and the implementation of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 (SALSRA) could determine the fate of US-Lebanese relations. Policies enacted during this period could also affect whether Lebanon will once again attain the distinction of being the only democratic Arab state in the Middle East.

Path dependence theory matters. It has been a significant factor behind the US policy of disengagement toward Lebanon since 1983. Instead of the vicious cycle of disengagement wrought by the 1980s policy, a new path dependence of engaged political activism could bring a more positive future for Lebanon. Foreign policy makers and students of policymaking need to understand path dependence theory in order to be aware of events that could trigger dependent paths, recognizing them as critical junctures, and so consciously factor the effects of path dependence into their decision making. Otherwise, alternatives outside the path dependent trajectory would not be considered. US policy toward Lebanon is a case in point. The US failed to recognize the dependent path it was traveling in which negatively affected its policies toward Lebanon for the past two decades.

B. WHERE DOES THE US GO FROM HERE?

The US needs to recognize this opportunity to break away from its current policy path, reassess its treatment of Lebanon, and determine a new path that will effectively serve US strategic goals. Such a new policy would be consistent with the US national security strategy of spreading liberal democracy and free market worldwide, goals arguably more easily obtained in Lebanon than in other Middle Eastern countries with substantial US involvement.

Recent actions to the Bush administration in the United Nations, and the administration's cautious approach to the implementation of the SALSRA

suggest the US is hesitantly beginning to recognize the historical and strategic importance of Lebanon, particularly its democratic potential. The US' verbal commitment and support for Lebanese sovereignty and independence appear to be accompanied with direct diplomacy towards Syria and Lebanon, along with the broader international community. While Iraq's democratic potential still tops the US list of priorities, Lebanon is starting to climb up the list of the US' most important foreign policy issues. The recent passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 attests to Lebanon's importance.

Perhaps the US has begun to recognize that Lebanon is well-placed among the Arab states to succeed in a transition to democracy. The infrastructure and the institutions for democracy are still present in Lebanon. Finally, the US may be starting to believe that a return to democracy in Lebanon is in the US best interests. A democratic Lebanon would not only lessen its appeal as a haven for terrorism, but would also provide the US with a democratic Arab ally in the Middle East.

C. LEBANON'S TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

How can the US facilitate Lebanon's transition to democracy? There are many suggestions. Actively pursuing a solution to the overall Middle East peace process, advocating bilateral peace between Israel and Lebanon, promoting economic progress, leaving Lebanon alone, aggressively pursuing the objectives of SALSRA, and developing a democratic peace strategy for the Middle East are just some of them.

The Lebanese ambassador to the US, His Excellency Farid Abboud, in reference to the Middle East peace process and its effects on Lebanon suggested that

The United States will have to play an active and evenhanded role in the process. It is vital that the United States acts decisively as far as the negotiations are concerned. The Madrid Conference stipulated that the United States is "a sponsor, a fair mediator, and a driving force of the entire process." This is what the U.S. role should be again, a driving force in the peace process. A laid-back

approach will not be productive and will not be congruent with the Madrid terms of reference. In view of our friendship with the U.S., we look forward to such an active role and to such a supportive role.⁹³

Terry Anderson, speaking about the Syrian occupation and possible US response, stated: “one of the most constructive things that America could do in its policy toward Lebanon, is to recognize and respect that there is a Lebanese Government, which was elected by the people of Lebanon, in a flawed but mostly democratic process, and that it will be up to that government to decide when to demand the Syrians leave.”⁹⁴ The US could then help in rebuilding the country and strengthening its democratic institutions.

Former president Amin Gemayel suggested the need for a strong diplomatic American initiative – “initiatives with muscles” since the US has leverage in its relationship with both Syria and Israel.⁹⁵ Gemayel’s suggestions included strong US support in upholding the 1989 Ta’if Agreements, enforcement of UN Resolutions 425, 426, and 520, Syrian withdrawal from all of Lebanon, and supporting free elections held under international supervision.

Amy Hawthorne also has suggestions to achieve a more effective strategy of promoting Arab democracy. One of these was that “the U.S. should not try to address too many issues in too superficial a manner. It should carefully and thoughtfully determine its top democracy-related priorities and push these issues consistently at a political level.”⁹⁶

⁹³ Farid Abboud, “Lebanon and the Peace Process: An Update.” Speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, June 28, 1999.

⁹⁴ “US Policy toward Lebanon,” June 25, 1997 hearing before the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 1st Session of 105th Congress. Terry Anderson is the chairman of Westchester Information Network and producer of the documentary film *Return to the Lion’s Den*.

⁹⁵ Gemayel also testified that Lebanon was becoming a Syrian client state and that Syria was systematically dismantling Lebanese institutions, including conducting flawed elections and demographic shifting.

⁹⁶ Amy Hawthorne, “Do We Want Democracy in the Middle East?” *Foreign Service Journal* (February 2001): 48.

Abboud, Anderson, Gemayel and Hawthorne all have excellent suggestions and each deserves US policymakers' careful consideration. Mark Amstutz, however, provides the most appropriate advice.

Intended as universal guidance for developing a more prudent and effective human rights policy, Amstutz developed four principles: "(1) the priority of actions over declarations, (2) the necessity of developing preconditions for sustaining and protecting basic rights, (3) the superiority of quiet over public diplomacy, and (4) the imperative of humility and modesty."⁹⁷ Substituting "democracy" for "sustaining and protecting basic rights" in the second principle, all four principles become applicable to conducting US foreign policy toward Lebanon.

The first principle recognizes the priority of actions over declarations. Actions speak louder than words. Distancing itself from the SALSRA and reserving the right to use the SALSRA only when it furthers national security interests show the Bush administration is already ahead in applying this principle. The administration recognized most of the SALSRA's goals cannot be immediately translated into action. Further, the Bush administration has already established an international reputation of doing what it says it was going to do. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are testimonies to that.

The US could use that reputation for action in fostering better relationships within the Arab world. Relationships are built on trust and trust is built when one knows where the other stands. The US could also reverse present trends and try to present itself as an honest broker of peace in the Middle East. To be honest brokers, US policymakers must have a good grounding on the international laws of right and wrong and must be able to always stand on the right, regardless of the country it is standing against. The US must also show that when a wrong is committed, it does not hesitate to intervene on the side of right, provided the right could be determined.

⁹⁷ Mark R. Amstutz, *International Ethics: Concepts, Theories, and cases in Global Politics*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999).

The second principle affirms the necessity of developing preconditions for democracy. To do this, US policymakers must rid themselves of many preconceptions they have regarding the Middle East, and make an effort to understand what could work in the region. There are many who blindly follow Orientalist approaches which erroneously question Arab character and political culture, and misunderstand Islam, tribalism, and patrimonial societies. Such preconceptions and stereotypes hinder and misdirect US efforts to cultivate the essential social, civic, political, and economic preconditions for democracy.

The preconditions for democracy include a society which understands democracy and is willing to fight for it, an economy that is not totally dependent on the ruling regime, a civil society which cannot be easily coerced by an authoritarian regime and a government where the legislature could exert real power over the executive. To aid in the development of these elements, the US should expand its economic, humanitarian and democracy building programs in Lebanon.

The presidential initiative Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is a broad step in the right direction for US policy in Lebanon. It affirms US commitment to Middle East reform by supporting and funding economic, political, and educational reform efforts. With over \$129 million committed to this effort in 2003 (in addition to bilateral economic assistance), Lebanon is well poised to benefit. Other US support to Lebanon is from the US Agency for International Development. This agency is focused on expanding economic opportunities and investment, accelerating economic reforms, encouraging trade and foreign investment, improving municipal services and environmental practices and policies, enhancing rural development, and developing public-private partnerships.

United States support to Lebanon's economic recovery and reconstruction is commendable but not sufficient. More can be done to support and increase funding for institutions of higher learning, other credible private institutions and non-governmental organizations such as the American University in Beirut and

Radio Free Lebanon which can promote liberal democracy and free enterprise. Funding, however, must be controlled to ensure it gets to the right people. More can also be done to locate business incentives and create economic opportunities.

The third principle suggests that the US proceed cautiously in its diplomacy, pointing toward quiet, not public, diplomacy. The elder Bush's administration accomplished more in the Middle East peace process through behind the scene negotiations for peace. The younger Bush administration should follow the same principle in its relations with Lebanon. It should encourage, for example, quiet diplomatic efforts to obtain bilateral agreements, even just a genuine truce, between Israel and Lebanon, exclusive of any agreements related to the peace process.

One pitfall the US should avoid is linking relations with Lebanon to a broader or comprehensive peace program. The interests of Lebanon cannot be achieved if they are always linked with the interests of Syria or other comprehensive plan. The US should develop an independent policy toward an independent Lebanon that could work regardless of the failure of a comprehensive plan for the region.

The last principle is integrally connected to the third and suggests how the US should proceed in the conduct of foreign policy – with humility and modesty. The US often conducts its foreign policy toward any nation with the best intentions. However, the way the US proceeds in arguing its case often ignores the cultural sensitivities of other nations. In the process, US foreign policies are often perceived as arrogant in the Middle East.

D. IRAQ, LEBANON, AND THE US NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

US national security strategy centers on establishing regimes friendly to the West, arguably through liberal democracy and free enterprise in the Middle East. The US road map to peace in the Middle East banks on success in democracy-building in Iraq spilling over into other states in the region. Eventually

it is hoped that the tide of peace would settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this strategy, Lebanese independence and transition to democracy would be a by-product of Iraqi democracy.

Currently, Iraq is in the center of the Bush administration's national security strategy; it should be Lebanon. Success in Iraq is proving to be elusive and I submit that democratizing Lebanon would be a more expedient and realistic way to show that an Arab nation could be democratic and economically prosperous. Lebanon has a democratic legacy and has the institutions necessary for democratization. Much more, its historical ties to the West make success more probable than Iraq.

Indications of economic progress, with some political progress, make democracy even more appealing and more probable in Lebanon. Lebanon's economic reforms are already showing limited but positive effects on the financial market. CNN.com reported that about \$4 billion in low cost loans from the international community, as well as plans to raise \$5 billion are raising Lebanon's hope for continued economic recovery.⁹⁸ A projected \$5 billion is to be raised through partial privatization of the government's power monopoly, sale of mobile phone licenses, and payroll cuts in state-run companies to facilitate privatization.

Other reports are equally promising. The 2003 US Report on the Middle East-Lebanon suggests confidence in the Lebanese government's economic strategy, despite its \$34 billion foreign debt (which constitutes 178 percent of its gross national product).⁹⁹ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated a two percent growth in Lebanon's gross domestic product in 2002, insufficient considering population growth but still promising considering it is a positive number. Inflation is at around 1.75 percent, down significantly from a high of 131 percent in 1992 and 15 percent in 1995.¹⁰⁰ An IMF official declared: "Over the last 10 years, Lebanon has made remarkable strides to rebuild itself into an open, service-oriented economy. It has successfully re-established itself as a

⁹⁸ Data from CNN.com news article, "Loans Buy Time for Lebanon," November 25, 2002.

⁹⁹ *U.S. Report on the Middle East – Lebanon*. 2003. (<http://www.usrom.com>)

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

major banking center, tourist destination, and as a provider of higher education and health services for the region."¹⁰¹

There is also progress in the political arena. Elections, though criticized as fraudulent, have been held where even Hezbollah participated and won seats. This shows that the various parties of Lebanese politics are willing to participate in a democratic process. Syria's hegemony over political leaders remains strong however, casting a shadow on the future of possible political reforms.

Nevertheless, studies show Lebanon has the greatest potential for further democratic development among the Arab countries in the Middle East. Baaklini, Denoeux, and Springborg found that the presence of established institutions for effective legislature, the strength of a state's parliament, could make transition to democracy less difficult.¹⁰² Taking Syrian hegemony out of the equation and focusing solely on the relationship between the legislative branch and the executive branch, Lebanon's legislature is strong and can play an active role in the democratization process. It has an established constitution, is autonomous, and is capable of resisting the executive branch if necessary. Further, it has the resources to effectively influence state decision-making.

It would behoove US policymakers to consider the possibility of making Lebanon the lynchpin to Middle East peace. Lebanon certainly has the potential to become a model for democracy, much more than Iraq does. Lebanon has the experience and desire to move forward and prosper economically and politically once again. If the US succeeds in helping Lebanon become a model for democracy and free trade, the rest of the region may follow.

The US supported Lebanon wholeheartedly before the 1983 Beirut bombings because of its strategic importance. Lebanon continues to be vital to US national interests and the advancement of national security objectives. The

¹⁰¹ "Lebanon's deficit reduction slows down, privatization program has been delayed – IMF," *2004 US Report on the Middle East* (December 2003). The IMF official was the Deputy Managing Director of IMF, Agustín Carstens.

¹⁰² Abdo Baaklini, Guilain Denoeux, and Robert Springborg, *Legislative Politics in the Arab World: The Resurgence of Democratic Institutions*. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 63.

Bush administration should fully commit to a path of engagement and support for a sovereign, independent and democratic Lebanon.

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